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AMONG THE SONS
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AMONG THE SONS OF HAN.

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various offices of the government of the State of New York.

AMONG THE SONS OF HAN.

*NOTES OF A SIX YEARS' RESIDENCE IN VARIOUS
PARTS OF CHINA AND FORMOSA.*

With Map.

BY

MRS. THOMAS FRANCIS HUGHES.

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London :

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.

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Page 135, 6th line from top, *for* "Five-rock Hill,"
read "Black-rock Hill."

Page 182, 9th line from top, *for* "works," *read* "words."

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PREFACE.

THE following notes make no pretensions to profundity of research or elegance of style; they are simple but faithful records of incidents, more or less interesting, which came under my own personal observation whilst accompanying my husband in his travels, and were noted whilst the events were fresh in my recollection. They were originally written for my own amusement, to while away some of the idle hours which hang so heavily on the hands of many lady residents in the East; and if they are now given a publicity which was never contemplated when they were penned, it is because, in the opinion of others to whom they had been submitted, there was some reason to hope that the plain unvarnished tale of our experiences—which turned out to be more varied and interesting than I had reason to anticipate at the outset of our travels—might possibly, by its very simplicity, attract some readers who have neither the time nor the inclination to study more elaborate or more profound

PREFACE.

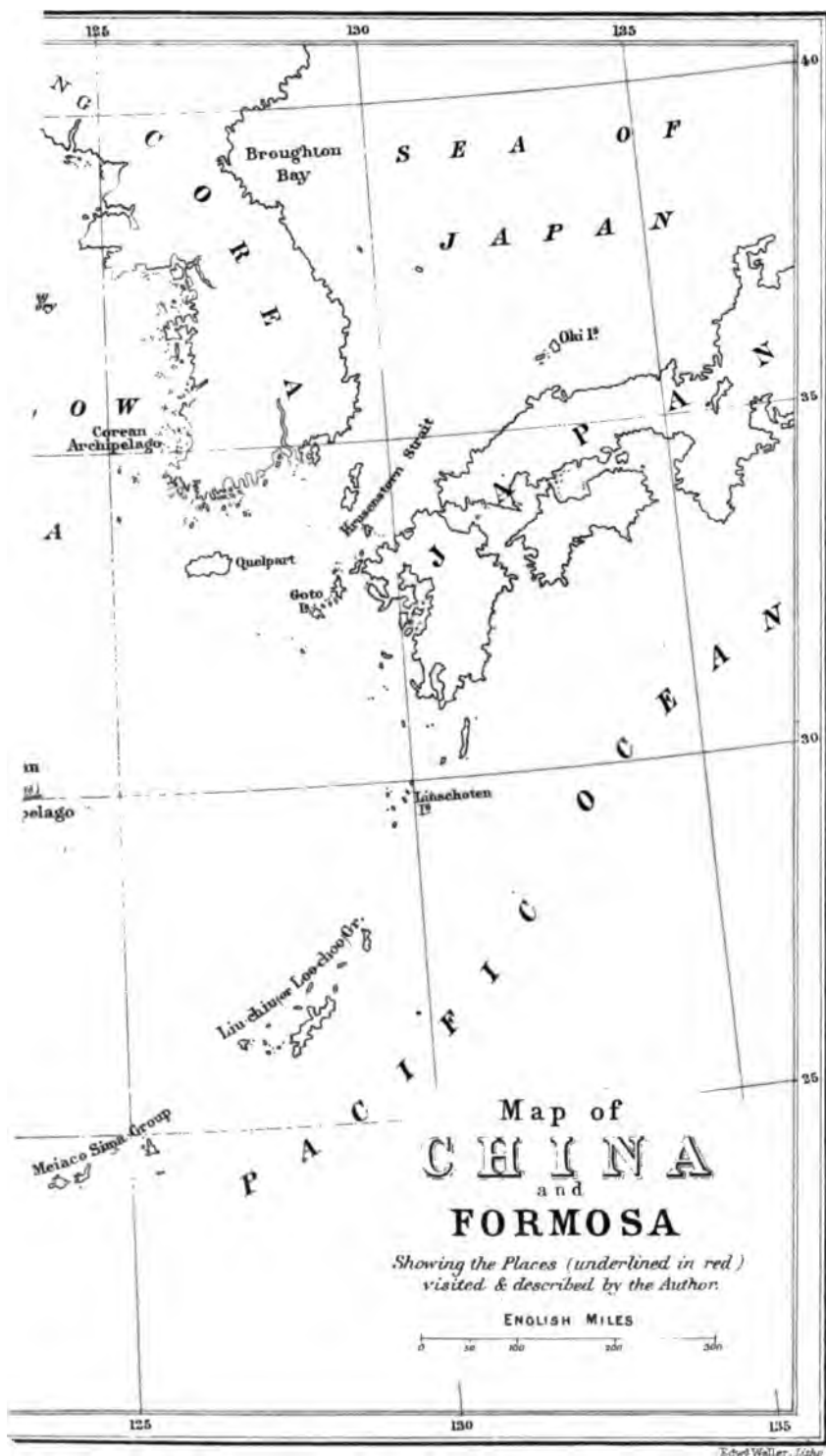
treatises on the same subject, and that thus the notes might be the humble means of contributing, however slightly, to a better knowledge of China and the Chinese. Two or three of the short sketches have already appeared anonymously in a Shanghai newspaper, and a few others formed the substance of an article in a recent number of "Tinsleys' Magazine."

For the information of those who are not sufficiently familiar with Chinese topics, it may be advisable to explain, with reference to the title of this book, that, as the Han dynasty, B.C. 202 to A.D. 221—contemporaneous with so much that is memorable in Western annals—was one of the most glorious epochs in Chinese history, so amongst the various designations applied to Chinamen at the present day, the most flattering and the most honourable, the synonym of all that is brave and good, is the popular term *Han tzŭ*, or Son of Han.

The accompanying map shows at a glance the extent of our wanderings in China, and the various places—some of them but little known to Europeans—visited by us and described in the following pages.

THE AUTHOR.

PARIS, 9th May, 1881.



AMONG THE SONS OF HAN.

CHAPTER I.

The voyage out—Marseilles—Naples—Port Said—The Suez Canal—Meeting Baron Lesseps—The Red Sea—Stopped by an Arab ship—Aden—Galle—Singapore—Hongkong—Saigon—Shanghai.

LEAVING home for the first time, with the prospect of a lengthened absence, is a sad and terrible undertaking ; and when your destination lies at the other side of the globe, thousands of miles removed from those whose love and sweet companionship had hitherto been the very light of your existence, parting seems to be a sorrow almost too great, too bitter, to be borne. Duty, however, which makes the path of life smooth to some, for others often necessitates the sacrifice of their most cherished feelings ;

and it was the fate of the writer and her husband to be obliged to tear themselves away from the homes and relations they loved, and commit themselves to a residence of several years in China. It is simply impossible to describe the intense sorrow which I experienced when the sad hour of parting at last arrived, when I said good-bye to those from whom I had never been separated for any length of time before, and felt that years must elapse before my eyes could rest on their loving forms again. The scene is too sad and too sacred to dwell upon at any length, and I shall therefore dismiss a subject which to me will ever be a painful one, and turn at once to the main facts of my narrative.

The overland route, as it used to be called, to India and China has been so often described, and the various stopping-places are now so well known, that I shall not attempt any elaborate description of the impressions produced on my mind at the time of my visits to the interesting places we called at. I shall merely touch briefly on some of the more

salient features of the voyage out, and hasten to the immediate object of this book—the description of my life in China.

We left London on the 12th March, 1874, and crossing the Channel by Folkestone and Boulogne, we arrived in Paris about midnight. Next day we travelled as far as Lyons, where we had an opportunity I thoroughly appreciated of looking up old places with which a previous residence in that town had made me familiar. We arrived at Marseilles on the evening of the following day, and on the day after (the 15th) we embarked on board the *Tigre*, one of the magnificent fleet of mail steamers belonging to the *Messageries Maritimes Compagnie*. As we went on board, preparations for an immediate departure were going on: the bell was ringing which announced to visitors that it was time to go on shore; passengers were bidding their final adieux to the friends who had come to witness their departure; and painful and touching were the scenes we witnessed, as many, bound together by the ties of family and affection, reluctantly

tore themselves from each other. I remember being particularly impressed with the parting from her parents of one young lady who was going with her husband to Singapore: the aged couple lingered with their daughter to the last, and when they were compelled by the ship's officers to leave, the mother, placing her hands affectionately on her child's head, raised her eyes reverently to heaven, and then blessed her daughter with the sign of the cross. In a few minutes we began to move slowly away from the pier, the crowds on shore waving hats and handkerchiefs, and with a bright sky overhead and a smooth sparkling sea beneath us, we auspiciously began our long journey to China. One tall young sailor continued to lean over the ship's side and to wave his red cap long after the faces of the people on the pier had ceased to be recognisable; and it was only when the crowd on shore had completely vanished from view that, with glistening tears in his eyes, he relinquished his post of observation.

After a beautifully smooth passage we reached

Naples early on the second morning after our departure, and we had hardly anchored in the beautiful bay before we were boarded by a miscellaneous crowd of boatmen, hotel-runners, fancy-dealers, and musicians. The last-named were not less noisy, and, in spite of their profession, not more harmonious than the others. Two of them were men who essayed an operatic duet with much gesticulation and frowning at each other; in close proximity to them were two others, an old blind man and a female, who yelled at the top of their cracked voices the well-known Neapolitan air, "Santa Lucia," to the accompaniment of an excruciating guitar. The result, as may be imagined, was anything but gratifying. As we were only to remain at Naples a few hours we did not venture on shore, but remained on the steamer's deck, drinking in the charm of the enchantingly lovely scenery which surrounds the bay, with Mount Vesuvius frowning over all, dark wreaths of smoke curling up from its summit to the bright cloudless sky. Early in

the afternoon we weighed anchor, and all the Neapolitans hurriedly packed up their treasures—jewellery, gloves, articles manufactured from lava, photographs, etc.—which had been spread out on the deck a few minutes before, and left the ship. They continued, however, to cluster round the steamer in their little boats, and as we moved slowly away the two male singers resumed their duet, and the old blind man and his attendant female repeated a few more verses of “Santa Lucia.” The faster we moved away the more frantic were the efforts of the several vocalists to make themselves heard, and at the last their favourite melodies were abandoned and a wild improvised “Addio” was chanted forth with much fervour and kissing of hands to the departing vessel.

A pleasant run of four days took us to Port Said, where we stopped to coal, and where we anchored for the night. On the following morning we proceeded on our passage through the famous Suez Canal, and when we reached Ismailia we


were boarded by no less important a personage than the Baron de Lesseps, the energetic originator of the Canal, who happened to be in the neighbourhood, and who looked hale and hearty, and ready for any other great achievement that might demand his attention. We anchored all night at Ismailia, and on the following day we passed in the Canal the troopship *Crocodile*, with a large number of troops and some women and children, returning from India. In the evening we arrived at Suez, and after a short delay proceeded on our voyage. It was quite cold in the Gulf of Suez, and on the following morning we observed snow on the Arabian mountains which were in sight. This was, however, to be our final experience of cold weather; we were now nearing the much-dreaded Red Sea, where the heat is often more trying than in any other part of the voyage, and we soon began to realise the true meaning of a tropical temperature. On the third day after we left Suez the heat was intense, not even the faintest breath of wind stirred over the surface of the water, and the sea looked like an

immense sheet of glistening crystal under the dazzling rays of the noonday sun ; we were under double awnings, and passengers crowded towards those parts of the deck where the breeze made by the motion of the ship was most likely to be felt. Some little excitement was created by the appearance of a large sailing vessel lying becalmed some miles to the westward. Sailing vessels of the European type are sufficiently rare in those breezeless waters to be curiosities at any time, but on this occasion our wonder was heightened when we discovered that the signals which the strange vessel was flying were read to be "We want a doctor!" Under the circumstances our captain had no alternative but to put out of his course and steer towards the other ship, and in a short time we were near enough to discover that the decks of the vessel to which we were approaching were crowded with Arabs. When we stopped to lower a boat for the doctor, the slight breeze which the motion of the steamer had hitherto created died away, and in addition to the oppressive heat which then supervened,

we were disturbed by the startling terrors which the imaginations of our fellow-passengers raised amongst us. Might not the strange craft with her cut-throat-looking crew be a pirate in disguise, luring us to our doom? Or again, could it be any disease, some others said, less terrible than cholera, which had broken out amongst the crowded occupants of the sailing vessel, and if so, might not the infection quickly spread amongst ourselves? It was with the utmost suspense and anxiety, therefore, that we watched our small boat go alongside the other vessel; we observed that the doctor remained in the boat, whilst the chief officer who had accompanied him boarded the sailing vessel, whence, after remaining a few moments on board, he returned to his boat apparently in a not very amiable mood, and without any further delay rowed back to the steamer. Greatly to our relief, and to the extreme annoyance of our captain, it transpired that there was no illness whatever on board the other vessel, but that her crew and numerous passengers were Arabs who had char-

tered a large vessel to convey them to Meccah, that they were becalmed for several days, and that being unable to make "observations," they merely wanted to know where they were, and adopted the best *ruse* they could think of to insure their obtaining the required information from a passing mail steamer, which they knew would not stop, or go out of her course for anything less pressing than the probable necessity of saving life !

Two days later we passed Perim, and however much that solitary fort may be prized, situated as it is at the entrance of the Red Sea, we could not help sympathising with the unfortunate soldiers who are condemned to dwell for a time in such a desolate spot. Early next morning we found ourselves in Aden, which someone has described as "the abomination of desolation;" and, although it was a relief from the monotony of the voyage to have a drive on shore, and afterwards to watch the little nigger boys diving and performing all sorts of clever antics in the water, we were glad when we weighed anchor and proceeded on our journey. From Aden to Point



de Galle is the longest stretch of unbroken voyage between Marseilles and Shanghai, and it required all our ingenuity to devise methods for whiling away the time. It was interesting to watch the sailors at their work; they appeared to be always busy, some sewing, some splicing ropes, and others scraping decks. There was one man who never seemed to do anything else but roast coffee; all day long he kept turning by a handle the machine in which the coffee was roasted over a slow fire, and as he turned the handle his constant and unvarying song was "A che la morte," which he trolled out in a nasal and most melancholy tone. Our great amusement in the evening was to stroll forward to the forecastle and watch the sailors dancing, and hear them singing; some of the sailors were very clever, and their improvised entertainments enabled us to pass many a pleasant evening. On the ninth day after we left Aden we sighted the shores of Ceylon and entered the harbour of Galle, and it was again pleasant to break the tedium of the voyage. We remained

a day at Galle and then proceeded on our way to Singapore, which we reached in six days after a pleasant but uneventful passage. The approach to Singapore, with its abundance of richly green trees, some of them apparently growing out of the water, is particularly refreshing after a sea voyage. Of course we went on shore and drove to the Botanical Gardens; we lunched at the hotel, and we could not help contrasting the miserable fare supplied to us there with the really excellent *cuisine* we had been accustomed to on board the Tigre. Whether it was owing to the change of food, or some other cause, I do not pretend to say; but towards evening a number of the passengers, on their return to the steamer, found themselves very ill, and the doctor pronounced the illness to be a form of English cholera. Next morning, however, we were at sea again, and the pure fresh breeze soon helped to dispel all sickly feelings, and when we arrived at Cape St. Jacques two days later, the health of nearly all on board was completely re-established. After remaining a night at anchor

off the cape, we proceeded up the Saigon river, and were much struck with the wild jungle look of the country through which we passed. The banks of the river are completely covered with dense forests, and one could not help fancying that every species of wild animal prowled beneath the shade of the thickly-interwoven foliage. We were told that monkeys are frequently to be seen disporting themselves amongst the trees on the river banks; but probably because the day was too far advanced, and the heat of the sun too great, nothing of the kind was seen by us; the jungle was as silent, and appeared to be as deserted, as if it did not give shelter to a single living being. The farther we went inland the more intense did the heat become; not a leaf stirred with the faintest breath of a breeze, and a fierce sunshine beat down upon the earth causing that shimmering appearance in the atmosphere which one only notices in tropical climates, and which seems to harmonise so well with the constant buzzing of insects. Early in the afternoon we arrived at Saigon, and if the great

heat made us uncomfortable whilst the steamer moved slowly up the river, our condition was worse than ever when we were moored alongside the wharf, and were given over as a prey, not only to the heat, but to the myriads of remorseless insects which then swarmed in upon us, and crawled and crept over us, and stung us to their hearts' content; if, indeed, such cruel tormentors can be said to have hearts. I think if there be a purgatory upon earth it must be Saigon. During the sleepless twenty-four hours we spent there I failed to see a single redeeming feature in the place; and the French authorities would earn the everlasting gratitude of all who travel by the French mail steamers—whether officers, crew, or passengers—and the applause of all lovers of common sense, if they would allow the transshipment of cargo, mails, and passengers to take place at the mouth of the Saigon river, instead of compelling such enormous steamers, with all on board, to crawl some thirty miles up a narrow, winding, and dangerous river, and lose at least

thirty-six hours of valuable time once a fortnight: the trade and interests of the colony could hardly suffer by the change, and the gain thereby would be universally felt. It was with feelings of extreme thankfulness that we steamed away from Saigon, and when we found ourselves once more at sea we breathed again, and fairly revelled in the enjoyment of the cool air and the refreshing breeze. Four days after we left Saigon we arrived at Hongkong, and, although we had still some distance to go, I felt that we were at last in Chinese waters, and that our long, but by no means unpleasant, journey was virtually at an end. Landing in a gig which had been sent off from shore for our use, we were received by some friends of my husband in the kind and hospitable manner which impresses all new arrivals in China so favourably. I shall never forget the sensations I felt when I first was persuaded to get into a sedan-chair, and found myself raised to a level with the shoulders of the coolies who bore me along. The motion was so strange, and the

position appeared to be so undignified and unpleasant, and the infliction of such a labour upon two human beings seemed so cruel, that before I had been carried any distance I insisted upon being put down, and upon walking to the house at which we were to stay, greatly to the amusement of my companions and the astonishment of the coolies. It was some time before I could divest myself of this feeling, and even when a party of us went next day to Victoria Peak, the top of the high mountain which overhangs Hongkong, I preferred walking the entire way, up and down again, although the unwonted exercise proved very fatiguing. After a very pleasant stay of two days in Hongkong we proceeded on our way to Shanghai, where we arrived three days later; and, strange as it may appear to those who have, never made a long sea voyage in a large mail steamer, I felt positively sorry when the time came for going on shore and saying farewell to the little cabin where I had been for the past six weeks so comfortable and so happy.

CHAPTER II.

SHANGHAI—The Bubbling Well—"Pidgin" English—
A street riot.

My first impressions of Shanghai were decidedly favourable; I had heard, of course, that the place was a busy and important one, and that many Europeans lived there; but I was not prepared to see such fine buildings—some of them almost palatial in their size and appearance—such well-kept streets, lighted with gas and watched over by solemn-looking policemen, just as they are at home, such handsome shops, such beautiful gardens, and such pleasant society. Of course I allude only to the foreign or European settlements, which, though inhabited by many thousands of Chinese as well as by the Europeans, are completely distinct

from the Chinese city, and are altogether under the direction of Europeans. The weather, too, on our arrival at the end of April was simply charming; it was like the weather of an ideal English June, with clear skies, and a bright but not unpleasantly warm sun; and an afternoon drive into the country, under overhanging trees and past charming suburban villas, made one almost feel at home again.

The favourite afternoon drive with Shanghai residents is along the well-formed, well-kept road, which runs in a westerly direction past the race-course to the Bubbling Well, four miles from the settlement. What the park is to Londoners in the season, the Bubbling Well road is to the Shanghai-ites; and it is a sight to see the motley collection of vehicles—broughams, phaetons, gigs, and dog-carts—many of them well appointed, with native servants in livery, others driven in most erratic fashion by young Chinese fops (who, cigar in mouth, in this one particular ape the fashions of the Western Barbarian), and the crowds of more

or less efficient equestrians, male and female, which line the entire road on a pleasant afternoon, between the hours of five and seven. The well which gives its name to this fashionable highway is in some respects a curiosity, and is an object of superstitious regard to the Chinese. It is square in shape, with strong stone side walls, and a parapet about one foot high round the top. The water, owing to the presence of some gaseous matter, is always in a slight ferment, and the natives watch the bubbling fluid with awe, and invent the wildest theories in explanation of the phenomenon. The most popular belief is that an enraged demon dwells beneath the water, and that the bubbling is caused by his frequent communication with some kindred spirit. The Bubbling Well demon is held in great dread, and the people frequently throw their hard-earned "cash" into the water to appease the angry spirit.

One of the first matters which occupied our attention was the selection of some good servants, and in the prosecution of this important task I

became partially initiated into the mysteries of that peculiar jargon which is almost universally used in China between employers and servants, and is known as "pidgin" English. At first it sounded excessively childish, and many of the expressions appeared to my untutored ear silly and unmeaning, and it was not until I had been some time in the country, and found that the patois, being to a great extent a literal translation of the Chinese idiom, was the readiest way to communicate my ideas to native ears, that I consented to use such expressions as "Boy, I wantchee you chop-chop go top-side catchee my one piecey book; supposey no can find that side, maskee." In many instances the English words are merely altered by the addition of a final vowel: the word "hole," for instance, becomes "hole-o," or rather "one piecey hole-o," and it is not surprising that many ludicrous mistakes take place with such a clumsy and inadequate medium of communication. Two amusing instances which came under my notice afterwards

occur to me, and as illustrations of the humours of "pidgin" English it may not be out of place to insert them here. One day I happened to tell our butler that a ham, or "that piecey ham-o," as I described it, which he had kept *perdu* in the pantry, ought to be placed on the sideboard at luncheon time, and as he answered: "All right, missisee," I assumed that he understood me. What was my astonishment next day when I found that the intelligent youth had actually placed on a tray, neatly covered with a white cloth, a large hammer, not a ham, in a conspicuous place on the sideboard! Of course he mistook ham-o for hammer, but I have often wondered what object the man could have thought I had in giving the order as he interpreted it. Possibly he thought it was some "joss pidgin," some western religious observance beyond his powers of comprehension, and therefore to be carried out without question on his part. This mistake, however, was not as ludicrous as one of which I was a witness at another house. I was

one of a party of ladies spending an afternoon together, and the lady of the house wishing to write a note rang for some paper, and told the servant "one largey sheet can do;" meaning, of course, that one large sheet of notepaper would be sufficient. I do not think that a merrier peal of laughter was ever heard than that which greeted the "boy" as he entered the drawing-room grinning from ear to ear over an immense sheet which he had taken off one of the beds, and now held extended at arm's length, saying: "Missisee, no have got more largey sheet this side."

As a pendant to the above I will venture to add an anecdote I heard soon after my arrival in China, describing a mishap which may have been partly caused by the use of "pidgin" English. The Chinese are, as is well known, very clever imitators; this faculty of imitation renders them highly useful as artisans and domestic servants, but occasionally, as in the following "owre true" tale, it places them in rather embarrassing positions.

Some years ago a gentleman stationed in China received from England a piece of superfine cloth just large enough to make a coat, of which he stood greatly in need; being aware of the imitative genius of the Chinese he called in a native tailor, and handing him an old coat and the new cloth, bade him turn the latter into a garment exactly the same as the old one. The Chinaman said: "Can secure makee allo same." The tailor thereupon proceeded to make a coat exactly the same in size and shape; but observing a large patch in the centre of the back of the old coat, he cut a hole out of the new one and very neatly fitted in a patch to correspond with that in the old garment. As may be imagined the gentleman was chagrined and disappointed, and took care to be more explicit in his orders to Chinese workmen in future.

As my husband on our arrival had received orders to proceed to Chefoo, we remained only one week in Shanghai, and as I shall have occasion further on to write more at length about the place

I shall refrain for the present from giving any further account of the "Model Settlement" or its surroundings. I must, however, advert to a rather startling incident which came under my notice during my short stay in Shanghai.

On the day after our arrival there was a good deal of excitement, of which I was at first in happy ignorance. It arose out of a serious disagreement between the Ningpo residents on the French concession and the French municipality, at whose instigation a road was then being made which was said to encroach upon the Ningpo cemetery. The friends with whom we stayed lived on the French Bund, and as the evening advanced I could not help noticing a certain amount of haste and excitement in the movements of the people about us. At dinner it was stated that a street riot was anticipated, that the volunteers were told to be in readiness to turn out on a preconcerted signal, that certain French ladies had already gone for refuge on board the mail steamer, and that the French consul was barricading himself at his consulate

in anticipation of an attack. All this sounded strange to my ears, but as I had often heard at home of the dangers attending a residence in the Far East, I thought this was only an every-day occurrence, and I steeled myself to endure as bravely as I could a scene such as I thought I should frequently have to meet with. I must confess, however, that my courage began to slacken when in the middle of dinner the guns were fired which were to be the signal for the volunteers to turn out. Immediately our host jumped to his feet, and rushing into a neighbouring room, he quickly returned with a revolver, which he thrust into my husband's hands with a hurried request to stay behind and "protect the ladies;" he then rushed swiftly downstairs and into the street. Frightened as some of us undoubtedly were, we could hardly refrain from laughter when, after the departure of our host, my husband examined the revolver and found that it was not loaded, nor did any one in the house know where the ammunition was kept; indeed, ammunition,

it so happened, would have been of very little use at the time, for the revolver was so rusty and damaged that, except for show, it was perfectly useless. For a considerable time we were in a state of great suspense and anxiety, and our ears were on the stretch for any noise that might sound like the approach of the angry mob. It was midnight when, after many alarms which turned out to be false ones, our host returned and told us that the rioters were dispersed, but only after they had set fire to some houses, and killed two Frenchmen. I may add that this exciting scene, so far from being an every-day occurrence, was the only one of the kind that came under my notice during my stay in China.

CHAPTER III.

CHEFOO—The Bamboo temple.

THE voyage from Shanghai to Chefoo, by one of the small coasting steamers, in the teeth of the north-east monsoon, is a trying ordeal to any but the most hardened sailor; and I found that all the inconveniences I experienced on board the Tigre put together were nothing compared with the bitter discomforts I was obliged to undergo during the two days I was on board the Sin Nanzing. It was not until we had rounded the Shantung promontory, and had got into comparatively smooth water, that I felt a pause in my misery. The view from the steamer's deck as you enter the Chefoo harbour is very pleasing. Passing the group of islands which guard

the entrance, on one of which stands the Luson lighthouse, you are at once struck with the bold outline of the lofty hills in the background; to the north the Chefoo bluff attracts attention, and as you glide quickly over the smooth waters of the bay the European buildings on Yentai hill become one by one visible. When the steamer anchors at the entrance to the inner harbour, the shabby appearance of the many Chinese junks, the bleak appearance of the barren rocks, and the apparent deficiency of trees and verdure, remind one strongly of Aden, and a feeling of blank disappointment creeps over the new arrival. These gloomy impressions are completely removed, however, when the visitor has had time to explore the many charms of the place; the neat bungalows with their pretty gardens and trim lawns; the walks and rides along the sandy beach, and on the picturesque wooded slopes known to the residents as the "Bois de Boulogne;" and the rich aspect of the surrounding country.

In the neighbourhood of Chefoo there are some

interesting places, to which pleasant little excursions are frequently made by the foreign residents. The lofty hills which lie to the west and south, and form such a magnificent background to the scenery of the place as viewed from the sea, contain many attractive spots where all the beauty of sylvan scenery, of overhanging trees, sparkling valley, and shining hill-side, cool gurgling streamlets, and a profusion of lovely wild flowers, contributes to make a day spent in that locality a bright and sunny one in the recollection of the excursionist. Perhaps the most popular of these picturesque resorts is a woody dell on the southern slope of the chief mountain range, through which a clear sparkling rivulet makes its way, and in which stands the Chu Lin Miao, or Bamboo temple.

As a specimen of the way in which the journey there is accomplished, and to give some idea of the place itself, the following short description of a trip we once made to the temple may contain some points of interest.

We started about midday, taking with us for my own accommodation, as I was the only lady of the party, one sedan-chair, an open one, in the body of which was packed away a suggestive looking hamper, side-by-side with a sketch-book, and some warm wrappers for the return journey after sunset. After some little bustle and confusion, the four chair coolies apparently deeming it essential to shout all that they wanted to say at the top of their voices, we got away, and directing our journey at first in a southerly direction, we passed through a plain exhibiting all the various phases of Chinese rural and village life. The day was one of those bright ones so common during the autumn and winter months in Northern China, and, although the crops had all been gathered in, and the country stripped of the rich aspect which waving fields of millet, Indian corn, etc., had given to it some weeks before, the bright yellow stubbles, the golden-tinted trees, the picturesque-looking cottages—no longer hidden by the tall standing crops—the

curling wreaths of smoke which told of the approach of winter, and the bright cloudless Italian sky above, all combined to render the surrounding landscape charming, and to enliven our spirits as we passed along. Our road carried us through the walled village of Chi Shan So, which is a curiosity in its way, being a perfect square, each side of which is only about two-hundred-and-fifty yards in length. It has four gates, facing the cardinal points, the houses are substantially built, and the inhabitants are in more comfortable circumstances than the ordinary Chinese. As usual in Chinese streets, numbers of black pigs lay basking in the sun, and plump little children, now doubly plump with the accumulated clothes which the approach of the cold weather called for, waddled about the doors, or revelled in the enjoyment of mud pies and dirty faces. Farther on in the country we passed a couple of native sportsmen, each bearing a hawk on his arm, while a coolie walked behind, having a number of hares whose mangled remains gave evidence of the ferocity of the bird

which killed them. Soon afterwards a country woman of the better class passed us, probably on her way to visit some female friend in Chefoo. She was seated on a mule, which was led by a man; her gaudy garments and numerous cushions displayed all the colours of the rainbow, and if truth must be told, her not very attractive face was profusely covered with roseate hues which nature never implanted there. After a journey of about four miles we arrived at the foot of the mountain, and then commenced our toilsome climb up the rugged path. Halfway up the ascent we had a deep valley on our right, through the midst of which ran a mountain stream, on whose banks we could observe a number of natives busily engaged in washing clothes, and spreading them on the grass to dry; on the opposite hill we observed some women and children gathering herbs, and clad in the fanciful garments so much affected by the better class of peasants, such as loose dark-blue tunics and bright red trousers, or light-blue tunics and pink trousers, and these

gaudy colours contrasted well with the dark hues of the mountain-side, and the evergreens and golden leaves that clustered plentifully around them.


Along the narrow paths, some of them very steep and dangerous, that led to the top of the mountain pass to which we were going, we saw a number of mules, accompanied by some old Chinamen, toiling along up the almost perpendicular ascents. One could not help pitying the jaded looks of both men and animals; the mules were laden with boughs, dried leaves, and grass, which the old men had collected for fuel, and the tinkling of the little bells which were suspended round the necks of the animals seemed to keep time to their weary footsteps.

Arrived at the top of the pass, we were struck with the magnificence of the view which stretched out before and behind us. Looking back on the way by which we came, we could see Chefoo in the distance, with its wide harbour and crowded shipping, and the plain below seemed like one

vast garden smiling in the glad sunshine; whilst on the other side of the mountain a wilder and less cultivated valley, plentifully supplied with trees, extended for some distance to the foot of another range of hills which lay beyond. The extreme narrowness of the pass has suggested to the rulers of this region the erection of a warlike-looking gate, surrounded by battlements, and on the upper storey a couple of rusty cannons are left, neglected and untended, to guard this important approach. The cool breeze which met us on the mountain-top was very refreshing after the climbing we had accomplished, and when we had rested for a while we commenced our descent of the southern slope. A tolerably good path soon led us once more to level ground; and for about half-a-mile we passed through wild pasture-land where some cattle were browsing, under the care of a native who, Chinaman-like, seemed to be highly pleased with an occupation which required so little physical exertion. After a pleasant walk through the long grass, we arrived at the foot of the hill on which

the Bamboo temple stands. We passed through a most pleasant grove, consisting principally of a species of oak, the bark of which resembles cork, and might very well be substituted for it. Quantities of mistletoe grew on these trees, and the sight of the familiar green leaves immediately suggested merry meetings, cheery firesides, well-remembered faces of dear ones at home, and the festivities of Christmas-time in the old country now far away. The brightness and warmth of the sun, late as was the season, made the shade of the trees quite desirable; and when we came to a pretty secluded place, near the bank of a mountain stream, with an inviting greensward, we unfolded our commissariat treasures, and in a short time were in the enjoyment of a little extemporised picnic, which the loneliness and romantic beauty of the place rendered doubly pleasant. Relieved by the rest, and fortified by the repast, we ascended still higher up the grove until we arrived at the temple. I must confess that I was not much struck with the beauty of

the architecture, or with the general aspect of the temple. The rich colouring and elaborate carving so common in such Chinese buildings were conspicuous by their absence; in fact, were it not for its romantic situation, the Bamboo temple would not prove very attractive to the curious traveller. On entering the principal gate we found ourselves in a small courtyard in which are planted various kinds of trees, a clump of bamboos on the left-hand side being probably intended to give some colour to the temple's name, there being no other bamboos near the place. On either side of the courtyard there are a number of small rooms, in each of which is placed one or more idols, and opposite the gate by which we entered the chief temple stands. The door is approached by two or three stone steps, and two very old bells, of antique pattern and of excellent tone, are hung up on each side of the entrance. The interior has a dirty and neglected appearance; in front above the altar is a gilt statue of Buddha in a sitting



posture, about four feet high; on the altar are bronze vases with gilt flowers and paper-leaves in them; four pink candles are placed on a table in front, on which a bronze urn also stands filled with incense. Hanging in front of Buddha is a small oil lamp, and a number of Chinese lanterns, and two banners, each having six streamers, are suspended on either side; a mat is placed on the floor in front of the altar on which worshippers may kneel and perform their prostrations. On the right of the principal altar is a smaller one, on which stands the brazen image of some Chinese deity with eighteen arms, having an incense-urn in front; on the left is another small altar, having a brazen statue of a female idol with a baby in her arms, which we were informed was the goddess to whom women pray for children. On the side walls are painted various groups of celestial or infernal beings. This temple is looked after by two Buddhist priests, assisted by two boyish candidates for the priesthood, all with heads completely shaved, and void of the caudal

appendage which usually ornaments the heads of Chinamen.

Buddhist priests pretend to a degree of sanctity which they can hardly be said to possess : if dirty and forbidding looks be taken as symbols of holiness, then I should say the priests of the Bamboo temple are amongst the godliest of mankind. It seems the saintly custodians of this temple are not always particular to display before the foreign unbeliever the strict observance of their vows which Buddha enjoins. They are sworn to abstain from the flesh of animals and from spirituous liquors ; but excursionists record that these priests have not disdained to regale themselves with the remains of cold beef and mutton which come in their way, and these pious men have been seen more than once to exhibit the potent influence which foreign spirits exercise on those who indulge in them "not wisely, but too well."

The shadows of evening were beginning to fall as we set out on our return journey ; following

the same path by which we came, we arrived ere long at the top of the mountain pass, and were glad to have what glimmering of daylight yet remained to accomplish our descent along the craggy mountain paths. On our way down the hill we saw an old Buddhist priest seated by the side of the path with a bundle by his side. The wearied old man had probably been wandering amongst the villages of the plain during the live-long day, collecting alms from pious peasants, and was now wending his way to the Bamboo temple, with an occasional halt, which his age and his day's wandering rendered necessary.

We were thankful when we arrived at the foot of the mountain without any *contretemps*, for by that time the short twilight had merged into night. As we proceeded along the rough road which leads from the mountain to the nearest village, we heard behind us a long sad chorus and dismal lamentations, which were re-echoed from the neighbouring hills, and sounded weird and awful in that lonely hour and place.

As we paused to listen, the doleful sounds died away, but after a brief silence the wail of sorrow was once more repeated, this time nearer than before. Curious to know the cause of such lamentation, we waited for some little time, the cries coming nearer and nearer. Again there was silence all around, and we were almost beginning to fancy that some mountain elves had been playing upon our fears with noises not of earth, when the cry of grief burst out suddenly once more, this time quite close to us, and in the darkness we could see a number of unearthly-looking beings dressed in white approaching us. On they came, two and two, howling dismally; and as they passed quite close to us we found that they were real live Chinamen and boys, clad from head to foot in the mourning garments of their country, which is white, and proceeding to the village where some friend or neighbour had died. The funeral wail was solemn and sad in the extreme, but the younger members of the procession can hardly have experienced any genuine

feelings of grief, for as they passed us some of them varied their lamentations with a hearty laugh and a joke at seeing foreigners in such a place and at such a time. When the mourners had passed us we proceeded on our journey, and in less than an hour we arrived at Chefoo without any further adventure, and much pleased with our little excursion.

CHAPTER IV.

Seventh moon—Memorial ceremonies for the dead.

THE seventh Chinese moon, which usually corresponds with the latter portion of August and the beginning of September, is in China specially dedicated to the God of Fire. At this time, too, the Chinese are particularly mindful of their deceased friends and relations, and quantities of paper-clothes, paper-money, and even paper horses and boats, are solemnly burned for the use in the other world of the departed spirits. Old and young may be seen at all hours, and in all places, industriously engaged in this strange form of devotion. I remember once seeing a veritable mite of humanity, scarcely five years old, squatted down outside a house-door, his little eyes full of

eager attention, his lips apart, his entire heart and soul evidently intent upon the conscientious discharge of the duty he had imposed upon himself, which was to light a number of brown-coloured sticks, known to Europeans by the name of "joss-sticks," and wait patiently until they were entirely consumed. Whether the little fellow had any other object but amusement in this serious undertaking it would be difficult to say, but, judging from the anxiety depicted in his precocious little countenance, I should say he was fully impressed with the importance of his occupation, and, in sympathy with his parents and relatives, probably entertained some conviction that the burning of the "joss-sticks," and the arranging of them when lighted in a line with the doorstep, precluded the approach of any malignant evil spirits to the domestic hearth. Whatever may be thought of the wisdom of the task, it was impossible to avoid feeling an interest in the little fellow, or being struck with the prettiness of the scene when with his little

chubby hands he had formed his row of tiny lights, and remained watching the effect. Let us hope the exorcism had the desired result, and that the little boy's dreams were undisturbed that night by the approach of any unfeeling spirit or goblin.

During the seventh moon large feasts are spread out for the enjoyment of departed relatives, and bands of music are specially provided to discourse "concord of sweet sounds" to the friends who are no more. Processions, of which the Chinese are so fond, line the streets, and night and day gongs are beaten with a vigour and perseverance worthy of a better cause. As a rule, these processions and unearthly noises are confined to the Chinese quarters, where no foreigners reside, and where the accumulated filth, concentrated odours, and loathsome sights, prohibit close inspection on the part of sensitive strangers; they occasionally, however, emerge from the Chinese streets, and the "Western Barbarian" may then feast his irreverent eyes on the curious spectacle.

It was on a night in the beginning of September that I beheld one of these strange processions, and the sight will not easily fade from my memory. The night being rather hot and oppressive I sought the verandah for coolness, and the brilliant flashes of lightning which frequently lit up the otherwise gloomy sky, predicted a coming storm. Suddenly a sound of gongs was heard in the midst of the Chinese village, and as I listened I found it came nearer and nearer our dwelling; the noise and the din evidently proceeded from an approaching multitude, and at last a torchlight procession emerged from the streets into the open space in front of our house. As they advanced like a band of unearthly beings, almost every man carrying a large lantern with Chinese characters upon it, a number of little boys ran in front bearing blazing torches, which they applied to little heaps of paper-offerings scattered at intervals on the road, giving the appearance, when ignited, of a chain of fire running along the entire route. Amongst

the processionists many carried gongs, which they belaboured with unflagging zeal; and if their object was, as I was informed, to frighten away all evil spirits, and the spirits are at all gifted with nerves, I am sure they must have succeeded. I was strongly reminded of Drury Lane stage at pantomime time as they all bent their course down the jetty in front of our house, leaving a train of fire behind similar to what preceded them; and when they arrived at the end of the jetty they formed themselves into a square, which at a distance looked like one massive blaze of light. The deep roaring of distant thunder, and the brilliant flashes of lightning which occasionally shot out of the murky sky, seemed fit accompaniments to the weird scene, and contributed to form a grand and solemn picture. After a delay of a few minutes the mass of lamp and torch bearers embarked in large sampans (native boats), and a procession of five or six boats, all brilliantly lighted up, was then seen to glide slowly over the waters of the bay, leaving a long chain

of glimmering light on the surface of the water behind them. Slowly they passed along, the lights gradually growing dimmer, and the constant noise of the gongs becoming less distinct as the boats proceeded farther and farther from the shore. At last the lights faded away in the darkness, and silence reigned around us; but only for a little time, for far over the dark motionless waters were soon seen the flashing lights returning, and ere long the eternal gonging again pierced my ears. Back they came along the jetty in the order that they went; and brilliant as was the scene and curious, I felt relieved when the procession disappeared in the Chinese streets, and silence was once more restored.

The main object of these enthusiastic processionists was, it seems, to put themselves and their families on as good terms as possible with—the devil! It was for this purpose they burnt the paper-money (imitation silver) with which they strewed their course on land and sea, and it was with the same sensible idea

that they burnt, as I was told, a paper-boat in the midst of the bay, so that if his Evil Majesty should ever feel inclined to indulge in a yachting excursion he would be provided with a suitable craft by his ardent votaries on earth. It is possible, however, that the intention of many of those poor Chinamen (if they had any definite intention, which is doubtful) was partly to assist in the way which their superstition teaches them is available, towards satisfying the wants of any of their departed relations who might be contemplating a sea voyage in the other world.

In other parts of China I have observed similar ceremonies at this time. On the river at Shanghai many boats full of people, some beating gongs, and others bearing torches, or throwing quantities of lighted paper into the water, may be seen in the evenings of August and September, and as the fire-boats glide through the crowded harbour, lighting up the European vessels as they pass, the sight is a strange and impressive one. These ceremonies are, as a rule, of a public nature, and

are probably got up to mark the season, and because the natives think it is the correct thing to do at that period. Occasionally a private ceremony is arranged with reference to some special incident, and then the presence of priests and a greater formality give more solemnity to the affair. One evening as we were strolling in the Shanghai public garden, which adjoins the river, our attention was attracted by the discordant sound of gongs, cymbals and other Chinese musical instruments. Twilight was fast dying away, and an accumulation of heavy clouds overhead threw a dark shade over the river and surrounding neighbourhood. Presently two large native boats, brilliantly illuminated with Chinese lanterns, were seen to approach; and as they drew nearer to where we stood, I noticed that on the deck of the leading boat was erected an altar elaborately ornamented with tinsel and artificial flowers, before which knelt a venerable-looking Buddhist priest, who wore a high hat and a long cloak or cape, and appeared to be deeply engaged in prayer. Around him were

grouped other priests in the usual yellow robes of their calling. The entire scene looked strange and weird, and as the boats, with their numerous lights reflected in the still water, and the priests with their devotional attitudes, moved slowly past amidst the din of Chinese music, I could not help fancying that some cleverly arranged panorama was suddenly extemporised for our enjoyment. We were told afterwards that the ceremony was a sort of propitiatory one organised by the friends of some sailors who were lost at sea a year before.

CHAPTER V.

Funeral obsequies.

IN our immediate neighbourhood at Chefoo was a one-storied building, extending from the street back some fifty yards, which had been unoccupied for several months, and which, with its closed doors and windows, had always presented a deserted and wo-begone appearance. One night as we were passing on foot I was astonished to find the front-doors thrown wide open, and the whole place brilliantly lighted up; the front-rooms seemed devoid of furniture, but large Chinese lanterns were profusely displayed, and numerous scrolls of red paper with Chinese inscriptions on them adorned walls, doorposts, and pillars; two long poles were also erected just outside the

door. Many decently dressed natives lounged about the entrance or moved through the apartments superintending the decorations; a passing Chinaman grinned upon being asked what these proceedings meant, and said it was a "Sing-song;" another told us it was "Joss-pidgin," and we were fain to be satisfied for the time with these vague explanations. Next morning we were awakened early by the sound of guns and most discordant music, and rushing to the window we found that these unpleasant noises proceeded from the adjacent house. A crowd of Chinese idlers were gathered round the door, and as the day advanced we observed numbers of the official and better class of Chinese coming to the house in chairs or on horseback, amongst others the Taotai of the district with his long retinue of shabby followers. Curious to know the meaning of all the noise and tumult, we passed the place on going out for our evening's walk, and seeing but few Chinamen about, we made bold to enter. Having been courteously received by the first man

who met us, we went on determinedly through an empty room, and then through a long passage until we arrived at a small courtyard, at the back of which an altar was erected with a canopy over it, from which two large square lamps were suspended. The altar had on it lighted pink candles, incense-urns, an honorary tablet, and the usual paraphernalia of Chinese worship; a mat was laid in front of the altar, and in the centre was placed a cushion for kneeling on. On either side of this temporary shrine a Buddhist priest knelt, and in a low tone chanted some prayers to the accompaniment of frequent strokes on an instrument made of bamboo, and an occasional sound of a muffled drum. The whole place had an air of mystery and melancholy about it, and we were glad to return to the open air of the street. On our leaving the place we heard the word given to fire, and immediately a coolie, with a very shabby official uniform on, took up a gingal (or small Chinese cannon, with four short barrels and a long handle) and fired three shots

in the air. Then our ears were tortured by the screeching and braying and clamour of a native orchestra, which was stationed in the little verandah in front of the house, and now struck up some specimens of Chinese music, which helped to accelerate our departing footsteps. Never in my life had I seen such pale decrepit-looking mortals as were the members of the "orchestra," and the instruments were not only old, worn, and patched, but were covered with the undisturbed dirt of many years. Truly were the musicians and instruments meet companions of the hideous sounds they conjointly created. As we passed the house on our return home, the orchestra, to our delight, was silent, and the weary musicians were snatching a few minutes of well-earned sleep, for they had been employed during the whole of the previous night ; but, true to their professional tastes, continued to discourse music of another kind hardly more disagreeable or less noisy than that they were paid for. The multifarious din proceeding from horns, drums,

etc., continued for three days and as many nights, and very thankful we were when our neighbourhood was at last rid of such disturbers of the peace, and the adjacent house once more resumed its wonted deserted appearance.

The cause of all this noisy demonstration, we were afterwards told, was the death of an old lady in Swatow, in the south of China. Her son held some official appointment in Chefoo, and on receipt of the sad news of his mother's demise he betook himself to retirement and mourning for the space of a month. When it may be supposed the first burst of his grief was over, he selected our next-door house as a sort of reception-hall for his numerous friends, who, on an appointed day, came by invitation to express their sympathy with him in his bereavement. On their arrival at the reception-hall, clad in their official robes, they proceeded through the outer rooms—which were decorated, as has been stated, with inscriptions appropriate to the occasion—to the courtyard at the back, where the altar was erected, on

which was placed the tablet of the deceased, stating date of birth and death, and, there prostrating themselves, waited in a kneeling position until a voice from behind a partition—the voice of the orphan himself or one of his relatives—was heard to say: “I am grateful for your sympathy,” or some such words. The visitor then prostrated himself once more in front of the altar and retired. In the adjoining rooms were served tea and refreshments to the visitors; and some of the more intimate friends of the mourner, clad from head to foot in white, were constantly in attendance to receive the sympathisers as they arrived, to look after their requirements, and to escort them to the door on their departure.

CHAPTER VI.

“Joss-pidgin.”

ONE pleasant September evening I was wandering along the sea-shore at Chefoo, delighted with the sights and sounds which surrounded me—the sparkling water breaking in tiny wavelets at my feet; the rocky islets at the entrance to the harbour bathed in the warm ruddy tints of the evening sunshine; the prattle and innocent diversions of the children on the beach; and the music borne by the balmiest of breezes from the band of a distant foreign frigate; and for some time I could hardly realise the fact that I was not in Europe, but on the most easterly shores of Asia. After walking a short distance on the beach, the softness of the sand rendered it advisable to take a path

which led into the country. On either side long millet and Indian corn grew, and in a short time I arrived by a rustic path at a little "joss-house," which I had often noticed before, but had never particularly examined. It could hardly be said to be a "joss-house," or a house of any kind, for it was simply an enclosure about four yards square, with no other roof but the azure vault of heaven; foreigners, however, pronounce all such sanctuaries "joss-houses," and perhaps the name is as good as any other. This humble shrine has two circular doors, with steps from the road leading up to them, and just outside one of the doors is a roughly-carved stone, intended to represent some hideous fabulous monster. The floor of the interior is covered with grass and weeds, and a fir-tree rises from within and spreads its branches over the walled enclosure. At the farther end is a small altar, with a hollow space in the wall above it, and on either side of this niche the walls are adorned with rough pictures of Buddhist deities.

Whilst I was noting the peculiarities of the place, a Chinawoman, accompanied by a little boy, approached. The woman, if not pretty, had nothing repulsive in her appearance; she was young, and clean-looking; her costume consisted of a loose light-blue jacket or tunic extending to her knees, and a pair of loose trousers of the same material and colour; her feet were of the natural size (not dwarfed and deformed like those of even the poorest Northern Chinawomen) and were encased in white stockings, and shoes with thick white soles. Her costume, as well as her simple and becoming *coiffure*, proclaimed her to be a native of Southern China. She was the usual height of Chinawomen, about four feet six inches, and her feminine vanity was evinced by the large gold rings which decorated her ears. The woman had evidently come with the purpose of going through some religious ceremony, and I immediately resolved to watch her movements without disturbing or embarrassing her.

She first took four "joss - sticks," lighted

them, and stuck them round the stone figure outside the door; then entering the enclosure she advanced to the altar, lighted four small pink candles, and placed them in the small hollow space above the altar; then she lighted more "joss-sticks," and placed them on the altar, repeating some prayers in a plaintive tone the while. These preliminaries completed, she knelt down and repeated more prayers for the space of about three minutes, when she performed the "kotow" by knocking her head three times on the ground in front of the altar. Having thus completed what may be termed the propitiatory part of the ceremony, she proceeded to make her petitions by unfolding a sheet of paper covered with Chinese characters, and spreading it on the ground in front of the altar; she then handed a corresponding sheet of paper to her juvenile attendant, who stood on her left, and again knelt before the shrine. Pausing for a few seconds in a suppliant attitude, and murmuring more prayers, she named aloud one of the

characters on the paper in front of her, and let what appeared to be a couple of small copper coins drop on the ground, and immediately afterwards the boy with a lighted "joss-stick" burned or singed one of the characters on the paper which he held. The dropping of the coins and the burning with the "joss-stick" having been several times repeated, the woman rose from her kneeling position, satisfied no doubt that her petition had been granted, and then commenced what appeared to be the thanksgiving or concluding portion of the rites. Holding in her left hand a quantity of "joss-paper"—which is a kind of roughly gilt or silvered paper, cut in small squares, and which the "joss" is supposed to accept as real gold and silver—she applied a light with her right hand, and after holding the burning treasure for a few seconds, threw it blazing to the right of the altar. Then with a final bow to the presiding deity she took her departure.

On entering the building afterwards, I found the candles and "joss-sticks" still burning, and I

noticed for the first time a bush in one corner of the enclosure almost covered with pieces of rags, the relics, no doubt, of former worshippers; and I could not help thinking of the holy wells of Ireland, overhanging which the traveller often sees trees bearing similar traces of the visits of pious pilgrims.

I am sorry to have to add, what I subsequently learned, namely, that the female whose pious devotions I had witnessed, had no more worthy object for her prayers than the assistance of "joss" in some gambling speculation. The Chinese are perhaps the most inveterate gamblers in the world; the lower classes seem to have packs of their tiny cards ever ready to produce, by way of varying the monotony of their lazy idle existence. The itinerant pastrycooks and fruitsellers always, or nearly always, dispose of their wares by the throw of the dice; and gambling-houses are everywhere to be found. The mania for gambling extends to the gentler sex as well, and the particular kind of gambling with

which the devotions described above were connected, is one for which the Chinese, especially the Southerners, as I am informed, have a decided fondness. It is a kind of lottery, in which a certain number of characters, selected out of a paper given for the purpose, are chosen, and if these characters correspond with those previously chosen at random by the proprietor of the lottery, the speculator wins, otherwise the money paid for a chance is hopelessly lost. In the case of the ceremonies I had witnessed, the woman came, it is to be supposed, with two of the gambling papers, and petitioned T'u Ti, the God of Earth (who is believed by the lower classes to favour their gambling speculations), to signify to her the lucky characters she ought to choose in order to win a prize in the lottery. By a prearranged plan she accepted the manner in which the coins alighted on the ground as an affirmative or negative reply to the choice of the particular character she named before she let them fall, and the boy burned a mark in the paper which he held near

any character which it was believed T'u Ti recommended.

There could hardly be a more forcible example of the unfathomable ignorance in which the lower class of Chinese are steeped, and of the gross superstition which regulates and pervades all their actions.

CHAPTER VII.

Chinese theatricals.

THE theatre in China is a venerable and popular institution; like everything else in the Celestial Empire, it seems to have made no advance with the lapse of time, and to be to-day what it was hundreds of years ago. What the English stage was in Shakespeare's time, such is the Chinese theatre in the nineteenth century. The stage is generally a roughly put together structure; the acting principally takes place in the open air; the female parts are performed by boys; and the properties and paraphernalia are of the most simple and primitive nature. Theatricals, however, continue to attract immense audiences, and it is interesting to observe the intense delight with

which the Chinese attend to every action of the performers, and to notice on the uplifted faces of the crowd the varying effect which the alternation of the scenes produces—

“From grave to gay, from lively to severe.”

The plays are generally historical—tragedies with a considerable dash of comedy in them—and abound with sensational and laughter-stirring scenes; but it is questionable whether the popularity of these representations depends much upon the merits of the pieces as attractive literary productions. The greatest commendations of Chinese theatrical critics seem to be bestowed on the gorgeousness of the costumes, and the “get-up” of the female characters. Another great source of attraction, no doubt the greatest, is the cheapness of the entertainment. The Chinese, as is well known, are our antipodes in all social observances, and in the matter of the stage this national peculiarity is exemplified; for whereas theatres at home are at most only tolerated by religionists, and are tabooed by many

pious people as the very worst invention of the Evil One, in China, religious rites, if of any magnitude, are almost invariably accompanied by theatrical performances. On such occasions free admission is almost always accorded to the public; and on the appointed day crowds of people flock from all quarters to stand in front of the stage, and enjoy for hours the dramatic treat provided for them. It is a sight on such a day to see the women hobbling along on their deformed feet to the rendezvous, dressed up in gala costume, their cheeks and lips profusely covered with brightest rouge, and their hair heavily gummed, and decorated with gaudy artificial flowers. Scores of little children, dressed in all the colours of the rainbow, are carried or led long distances to be present at the entertainment; and in the vicinity of the stage, vendors of cakes, fruits, and sweetmeats, drive, literally and metaphorically, a "roaring" trade. It is considered a benevolent act, and one highly pleasing to heaven, for a Chinaman to give a public theatrical performance;

and wealthy men who are ambitious, and who cater for popularity, often expend considerable sums in this way.

In Chefoo a rich Chinaman living in our neighbourhood, who had of late years been very successful in his commercial speculations, and had recently obtained by purchase the rank of a high-class mandarin, and the privilege of wearing an opaque blue button on the top of his official hat, gave an extensive thanksgiving performance in public to which we were invited. He selected a large open space close to his own residence, and there had a stage erected, opposite to which a large temporary box was constructed for the use of himself and his friends. On our arrival at the place our host came forward and received us with that formal politeness which is observable amongst the Chinese better classes, and we soon found ourselves in a roomy and comfortable apartment where seats were at once provided for us. In the middle of the box was placed a large table or altar which groaned under the weight of the good

things provided as thanksgiving offerings to Heaven. The innumerable varieties of Chinese dishes were here fully represented : roast ducks decorated with gilt paper, sweetmeats of all kinds, cakes plentifully bespangled with raisins and currants, imitation little pigs formed of pork, fruits in great variety, pigs' feet garnished with bruised potatoes, and a quantity of dishes whose composition and names are unknown to Europeans, were spread out in promiscuous and rich profusion. Two large pink candles, about three inches in diameter, and decorated with gold, silver, and green leaves, stood one on each side of the table, and in the centre a bronze basin containing burning incense was placed. The principal compartment in which we sat was flanked on either side by two small boxes, in front of which were screens which, while concealing the inmates from the vulgar gaze, permitted from within a view of the stage and the movements thereon : these were reserved for the native female connections of the host and his friends. In the meantime tea was ordered for us, and a servant placed a small

table or "tea-poy" in front of us, on which he arranged Chinese cups and poured into them some genuine Chinese tea as consumed by the natives themselves. It is a weak and insipid production of the colour of pale sherry, and tastes more of hot water than of tea; no milk or sugar is mixed with it, and what with the awkward shape of the cups with their embarrassing lids, and the uninviting nature of the beverage, a cup of tea *à la Chinoise* is not a boon much sought for by Europeans. On this occasion we made as few faces over it as we could in presence of our host, and we managed to sip a little without much inconvenience. For some time we sat and watched the actors, and listened to their shrill voices. The stage had no "wings" to it, and the only entrances were two doors at the back through which the actors entered when their turn came round, and retired when they had performed their allotted part. The imaginations of the audience were not assisted by scenery or stage accessories of any kind; indeed the entire back of the stage was occupied by the orchestra, and

by attendants and hangers-on who went about their occupations as if nothing else were taking place on the boards. The whole thing appeared childish and stupid to us, but considering the length of each principal actor's part, set as it is to music—if the hideous din and jargon can be called by that name—a vast amount of care and trouble must have been bestowed on the preparations. At all events, judging from the attention of the audience this Chinese *opera bouffe* might be pronounced a success. In a short time, however, we unconsciously became formidable rivals to the actors; the box in which we sat was open in front, and had not the advantage possessed by the boxes in which the Chinese ladies sat unobserved, so that in spite of the gorgeous dresses on the stage, in spite of the vigorous strumming of the orchestra, in spite of the falsetto shrieking of the actors, and the intrinsic merits of the piece itself (if it had any), a large proportion of the audience turned their backs on the stage, and the foreigners became the attraction on which the con-


centrated gaze of the multitude was firmly set. Whatever little interest we might have commenced to take in the performance being now completely checked by this demonstrative attention on the part of the crowd, we rose and quickly took our departure, leaving the actors in undisputed possession of their rights as caterers to the amusement of the multitude.

CHAPTER VIII.

The climate and people of Chefoo—A voice in the night—
A Chefoo winter—Departure from Chefoo.

AFTER a residence of ten months in Chefoo, my husband received orders to proceed to Shanghai, and although I rejoiced at the prospect of living in the largest European settlement in China, where the comforts and enjoyments of Western life are more easily obtainable than in any other Chinese port, I could not help experiencing feelings of deep regret at being obliged to leave the pleasant little community amongst whom we had lived so happily. Chefoo is in many respects the most desirable of all the open ports as a place of residence; situated so far north, and on the sea-coast, the summer there is not nearly so long

or so trying as at the southern ports, some of which, moreover, lie inland far beyond the reach of refreshing sea-breezes, and in the months of July and August many Europeans fly from the stifling heat of Shanghai to enjoy the cooler atmosphere and sea-bathing of Chefoo. As it usually happens, too, that more than one admiral's flag-ship is anchored during a portion of the summer in Chefoo harbour, the presence of a band, of which the frigate is almost certain to boast, at once suggests picnics and evening dances. Besides the salubrity of the climate, and the occasional amusements of Chefoo, the neighbourhood, as I have already said, is not without its charms; and after one gets accustomed to such national peculiarities as must necessarily be found in every Chinese locality, there is a good deal in the place which is somehow suggestive of home. Indeed the ruddy looks and the kindly disposition of the inhabitants, the general aspect of the country, the formation of the common houses, and in some respects the climate, often reminded me



of Jersey. The natives invariably appeared kind and good-humoured, and, so far from receiving any rudeness or incivility at their hands, I have ever been treated by them with respect and studied politeness. I remember on one occasion passing the cottage of a poor man who showed great taste in the arrangement of flowers in pots around his door. One exceedingly good specimen of an aster had a particular attraction for me on account of the delicacy of its hues, and by my gesture I expressed my admiration to the owner. The old man seemed pleased with my approval of his pet, and I proceeded on my walk; I had forgotten all about the circumstance when, to my surprise and delight, I found on my return home the very aster I had admired, pot and all—a present from an old Chinaman whom I had never seen before!

In spite, however, of its many advantages, Chefoo was to me the place where I had to undergo that inevitable awakening which must come to those who settle down for the first

time in a strange land, and amongst a strange people, far from home and all the attractions which make home dear to us. To be surrounded, as we were, with Chinese houses; to witness crowds of strangely-dressed beings constantly passing your window; when the sight of one of the European residents, or a stray sailor from one of the ships in harbour, was a comparatively rare event; to hear nothing in the streets all day long but the loud jabbering of coolies in a loud, harsh, and unknown tongue—often caused a feeling of depression, which I suppose was only natural under the circumstances. In reverting to these early feelings I am reminded of an incident which happened during the summer at Chefoo, and which proves that from the sublime to the ridiculous the transition is often rather startling. One July night the heat was so oppressive that sleep for some hours was out of the question, and after several vain attempts to court the drowsy deity, I calmly resigned myself to my fate; and as I lay with open eyelids, a flood

of thoughts came pouring upon me, and in the almost awful stillness of the night my busy imagination carried me hither and thither, to the utter defiance of time and space. In the midst of my distracted wanderings my memory called vividly before me the events of the past few months; I thought of home and the dear ones to whom I had so lately said farewell; I pictured to myself the sweet faces whose loving smiles seemed to beam upon me as brightly at that moment as they were wont to do in the hours of happy childhood. I remembered I was in a strange land, inhabited by strange beings, whose strange language sounded day after day harshly in my ears. Oh for one sight of the old home, one glimpse of the familiar faces, one whisper of the well-remembered voices now so far away! How musical would the most discordant street cry have sounded in that lonely hour and place if it were only framed in the language which I had lisped in childhood! But the few straggling streets which surrounded our house were composed

entirely of Chinese dwellings; the inhabitants were, presumably, fast asleep, and even if one as sleepless as myself had audibly expressed his woes, night would have been made doubly hideous to me. Suddenly a murmur of voices at a little distance startled me, a roar of laughter followed, and then a sudden rush brought the stragglers apparently beneath my open window. Now, thought I, for a burst of Chinese eloquence, loud, harsh, and unintelligible. Was I dreaming, or had my ears for once deceived me? Loud, indeed, rose a voice outside, but not particularly harsh, and certainly not unintelligible. "Arrah, be aisy," it said, "shure it's an Irishman I am, although ye may not think so. I'm a Roman Catholic, one of the ould faith. Come here, John Chinaman, till I make a Protestant of ye; shure it's good enough for the like of ye." Whereupon a roar of laughter from the Celestials took place, then a rapid retreat down the road with the tipsy Irish sailor in hot pursuit, and stillness once more reigned around.

Although the heat of summer is not so intense in the north of China as it is in the south, it is sufficiently great to form a marked contrast with the cold which is experienced during the winter. The frost is often keen enough to cover the sea for many miles with a thick coating of ice, and the northerly winds are often bitter and violent. On these occasions the natives adopt the precaution of covering their ears with neatly-fitting little caps lined with fur, and the men wear red hoods, which are tied under their chins and cover their shoulders. At night they guard themselves against the bitter cold by lighting fires under their sleeping places, which in the north of China are built of brick, and are called "kangs."

A residence, therefore, at Chefoo during the winter season has its benefits as well as its disadvantages. On the one hand the bracing weather, when the wind is not too keen, has an invigorating effect upon the system; riding and walking become necessary, and robust health and

buoyancy of spirits are the rule and not the exception. The lazy fireside, too, reminds one of home; and, owing partly to the loneliness of the season, and partly to the general holiday which ensues on account of the almost entire suspension of business at that time, parties and merry-making are events of constant occurrence. On the other hand, it must be confessed that a northerly blow at Chefoo in January or February, especially if accompanied by snow, is not entitled to be ranked amongst the comforts of existence. In the face of such a visitation, double windows, closed venetians, and woollen rep curtains are all inadequate for the exclusion of the wintry air; and with an enormous fire in an ordinary-sized dining-room, I have seen ladies shiver over their soup, and call for shawls and wrappers to shield them from the penetrating cold, which somehow managed to effect an entrance in spite of all precautions. On one occasion I remember the gale from the north was unusually severe; immense waves were formed in the bay or rolled

in from the sea, and dashed themselves with fury upon the beach, making a noise like thunder. The European sailing vessels in harbour dragged their anchors, and two of them were driven through the fleet of Chinese junks high up on the beach, where they were obliged to remain for days after the storm, until channels were cut for their return to their natural element.

I must now close my remarks on Chefoo. In a short time fresh scenes and faces were to dawn upon me, and it was not my good fortune afterwards to return to the little northern port; but memory often recalls the happy days which predominated during my stay there.

CHAPTER IX.

SHANGHAI—A Chinese wedding.

SOON after our arrival at Shanghai, in March, 1875, we were invited to a Chinese wedding, and as the ceremony is rarely witnessed by Europeans we gladly availed ourselves of the opportunity afforded to us, and I shall now endeavour to chronicle as faithfully as I can all that was noticed on the occasion. It may be premised that the bride and bridegroom, though highly respectable, cannot be said to belong to the very *crème de la crème* of Chinese society, and to this circumstance, as well as to the fact that the bridegroom had seen a great deal of foreigners, may be attributed what appear to have been certain relaxations of strict Chinese etiquette which were made in our favour.

At noon on the auspicious day we repaired to the bridegroom's house, and were received with much ceremony and politeness by the host and by his married sister, a well-dressed pleasant-looking specimen of a Chinese woman, who was doing the honours on the occasion, and seemed in quite a flutter of excitement over it. We were first of all ushered into a room or hall, in which, we were told, the ceremony was to take place, and which was entirely open in front. Four large oval lamps made of some gelatinous-looking substance, and ornamented with tassels, hung across the entrance; four large Chinese glass lamps were suspended from the ceiling, and from the centre hung a more ornamental-looking lamp covered with bead-work. Two ordinary Chinese tables placed together did service as a kind of altar, on which were placed a large incense-urn, flanked by a pair of large candlesticks to match. Another smaller urn and a pair of candlesticks stood farther back, the candlesticks being decorated with evergreens and

having large red candles in them ; while on the tables were ranged a number of small saucers full of fruit, pieces of sugarcane, and various highly - coloured but unwholesome - looking cakes and condiments. One large picture and some scrolls covered with Chinese characters ornamented the wall opposite the entrance, and the usual uncomfortable high - backed native chairs were ranged along the sides of the room. Having taken our seats, tea was brought to us, so hot that it was a positive relief to think it was only presented to us for form's sake, and not for immediate consumption. Some of the unwholesome - looking cakes were pressed upon us with many encomiums as to their excellence, and, our declining to partake of them being attributed to our extreme modesty, a parcel of the delectable morsels was made up and thrust hospitably into our thankless hands, so that we might enjoy an undisturbed treat on our retiring to the solitude of our home. On either side of the principal apartments was a room given

up to the use of the native guests, in one of which were a number of exceedingly well-dressed women, who were apparently much flattered by the admiration which a foreign lady bestowed upon their looks and costumes. And indeed they were to a certain extent worthy of admiration—their gay coiffures ornamented with pearls, their robes of embroidered silk and lined with softest fur, their elaborate jewellery (some of them had two sets of earrings let into their ears) all excited a great deal of wonder. But their curiosity with regard to the strange feminine attire which was brought so close, was far greater even than that bestowed upon themselves. A sealskin jacket seemed to meet with their approbation, but their amazement at a tightly-fitting pair of kid gloves was unbounded. They seemed to marvel how the gloves were got on, and on one of them being taken off a peal of merry laughter rang round the room, and one old lady grasped the ungloved hand and gave it a most affectionate squeeze. The opposite room was full of the male guests, who

were attired in their holiday costume, and were smoking, drinking, and chatting away the time whilst waiting for the bride's arrival.

As the *avant courier* had not come to announce the approach of the bridal procession the host and his sister invited us to inspect the inner apartments. The former, who speaks very good English, led the way, and in a short time we found ourselves in a very comfortable little room, rather overcrowded with new and very good Chinese furniture of dark polished wood inlaid with ivory carvings of animals, trees, etc., which was constructed apparently more with a view to ornament than comfort. On a table were spread out some of the bride's presents, most of which seemed to be highly useful adjuncts to the establishment of a young housekeeper, such as a set of teacups on an ornamented tray, teapots, candlesticks of various kinds, lamps, and above all a neat little dressing-case, containing a mirror and a number of little drawers filled with all kinds of mysterious implements for the elabora-

tion of a Chinese lady's toilet. Three large red boxes, quite new, piled one on the top of the other, we were told, contained the bride's trousseau, and had been conveyed to the house with much pomp and ceremony the day before. Our host informed us that the boxes were locked, that his future wife would bring the keys with her, and that after the conclusion of the ceremony, not before, he would be privileged to gaze upon the hidden treasures. A slight pause and some confusion followed this announcement, and, after some telegraphic glances had passed between the brother and sister, the former admitted to us in a whisper that curiosity had got the better of him and his friends on the previous night, and that a brass-smith had been summoned, who in a short time provided the means of opening the boxes! And now that the secret was divulged a false key was produced, one of the boxes was opened, and almost before we could utter a gentle protest against the apparent breach of good faith, one after another out came the neatly-folded silk robes, satin tunics, and all the other indescribable

garments of a Chinese lady's wardrobe, the costly materials and elaborate embroidery of which were pointed out to us with much pardonable pride. Just as the article which had occupied the lowest place in the last box had been taken out, and unfolded for our inspection—all the other garments being thrown about the room at the time in dreadful confusion—the loud clash of a gong, and the shrill piping of a Chinese band of music broke upon the startled ears of the expectant bridegroom, and with a look of horror he commenced flinging back the gorgeous dresses pell-mell into the box, and requested us in most pathetic terms to retire, as the bride was approaching! Much concerned about the embarrassing condition in which we left our host and his sister, we returned to the reception-hall, and took up a favourable position for witnessing the ceremony, which, by the eager faces of the native guests, and the near approach of the discordant music, we knew to be imminent.

We had not long to wait. First came a

number of respectably-dressed men, with official hats on, who arranged themselves about the entrance; then came, two and two, about a dozen little boys, very clean and well dressed, some playing flutes almost as long as themselves, and others keeping very fair time on a kind of small dull-sounding tambourine, which they beat with a stick; next came a set of more grown up, more noisy, and far more discordant musicians, and immediately after them the gorgeous closed bridal-chair, all scarlet and tinsel, which was deposited, facing inwards, at the entrance of the hall. The red candles on the table, and the candles in all the pendent lamps were now lighted, and a fussy-looking person, who turned out to be master of the ceremonies, took his place on the right side of the tables, and commenced to repeat in a sing-song tone some set expressions suited no doubt to the occasion. We noticed that all the movements throughout the ceremony were directed by this functionary, and his austere visage and unbending countenance seemed to show that

he looked upon the event of the day as anything but a joke, and to suggest that he would stand no nonsense from anyone who dared to dispute his authority. In a little time two middle-aged matrons, who though clean gave one somehow the idea of being poor relations, came forward each with a small bowl of what appeared to be stewed plums, and stood beside the bridal-chair. At the bidding of the austere Corypheus the matrons partly raised the curtain which hung in front of the chair, and presented the (to us) invisible occupant with some of the plums—the latter delicacy having been transferred from the bowl towards the delicate lips of the bride on the point of a silver bodkin, which each of the matrons drew gracefully from her own chignon for the purpose. With a delicacy, however, which we could easily appreciate, the bride refused the proffered dainty. The two women thereupon lowered the curtain, and, turning to the assembled guests, went about tempting them in the same manner with the dainty refused

by the bride; and although, we were honoured with an offer, and were assured that certain happiness would follow our acceptance, we were ungracious enough to politely but firmly decline. Another sing-song solo by the master of the ceremonies ensued, and before its conclusion our eyes were attracted to the door leading to the interior of the house, from which the young hero of the occasion was seen to issue with feigned reluctance, the two matrons appearing to drag him forth to the ceremony.

He had a preoccupied and uncomfortable look about him, appearing to be anything but a "happy man," and we could not help wondering whether his thoughts were then with his sister in the inner room, and whether he was speculating as to the possibility of the trousseau being rearranged in time to prevent detection by the young lady in the bridal-chair, who might be a Tartar in every sense of the word, for all the bridegroom could tell, with the slender previous

acquaintance which the stern customs of his country allowed him. On, however, he came, dragged by the relentless matrons, a carpet being laid in front of him as he slowly progressed, until he arrived at the side of the hall farthest from, and opposite to, the entrance, where he was left standing with his face to the wall. Then followed more sing-song declamation from the master of the ceremonies, and the two women raised the curtain from the chair, and reaching towards the bride, drew her gently from her place of concealment into the full gaze of the lookers-on.

A murmur of admiration escaped from the assembled guests as the delicate young figure was led along a carpeted path, like the bridegroom, to the place where the latter stood, until they were both side by side, with their faces to the wall. The bride was attired in a long red garment, profusely covered with gold lace and embroidery; her head-dress was a most elaborate

affair, in shape somewhat like a helmet, covered with light-blue enamel work and studded plentifully with pearls, while a long red silk veil fell to her feet, completely concealing her countenance. Standing together the bride and bridegroom began "chin-chinning" first each other and then the wall. Why the wall should have been honoured with this attention did not seem clear, but it is probable that an ancestral tablet was supposed to be there, and their devotional exercises were perhaps directed to that imaginary object. More mysterious words were uttered by the leader of the rites, more prostrations were made before the invisible shrine, and then the happy pair were turned round by the aid of the indefatigable matrons, and were urged to kneel with their faces towards the tables. The master of the ceremonies thereupon tied two pieces of silk ribbon together, one red and the other green, and gave the green end to be held by the bride, the bridegroom taking hold of the red; and with this mysterious

bond between them the ceremony was continued. The bride and groom then rose, the same useful females assisting them as before, turned once more to the wall, and again made profound inclinations to the wall and to each other, then knelt down, rose, turned round again and seated themselves side by side at the table. Food and wine were then placed before them, and were raised to their lips, as a matter of form only, by the assistants. Another performer then appeared upon the scene in the person of the bridegroom's sister, who, in spite of the coldness of the weather, looked very warm and flushed. She must have had a busy time of it since we saw her last, for, in addition to other labours which we knew of, she had changed her costume, and was now arrayed in a long red dress. With modesty and confusion she approached the bride and bridegroom, and "chin-chinned" them each in turn, whilst some mystic words were uttered by the director. At this point a number of fire-

crackers were discharged in the courtyard, the musicians struck up a lively air, gongs and drums were beaten, and in the midst of the discordant din the husband and wife—for it is to be presumed they were by this time entitled to those honourable designations—were led away by the attendants, the husband going first and moving backwards so that he faced the bride, and in this order they passed into the interior of the house.

The ceremony being now over, and the native guests appearing intent upon the feasting which was evidently about to commence, we, being the only two foreigners present, were about to retire, when a messenger came to say that the bride would be glad to see us in her own sanctum. We cheerfully accepted the invitation, and on entering we found the young lady still arrayed in her bridal costume with her veil down, standing in the middle of the room. With some hesitation we asked if we might be permitted to gaze upon the features of the bride, and a ready acquiescence

having been given, the veil was raised, and the pale face of an exceedingly modest-looking young girl of seventeen or thereabouts was revealed to us. The ordeal which a Chinese bride has to go through immediately after the removal of her veil is generally a very trying one, for the female critics who surround her are said to be often inconsiderate and even rude in their remarks; but on this occasion the infliction must have been aggravated by the presence of not only a Western Barbarian female, but—shade of Confucius!—the Western Barbarian female's husband as well. Whether our presence added to the discomfort of the bride or not, certain it is that the poor thing did not look very happy as she stood with bent head and downcast eyes; in fact her well-powdered cheeks were furrowed with tears, and neither our expressed hopes for her future happiness, which were interpreted to her, nor the presentation of a little bridal gift, provoked the slightest approach to a smile on her demure features.

We soon took our leave, the bridegroom escorting us with much politeness to the outer gate; there we parted from him, and we gave him our hearty congratulations and our best wishes for his felicity in the happy state he had that day so auspiciously entered upon.

CHAPTER X.

Lung-hua pagoda and temple—Chinese priests at their devotions
— Up-country trips — Fung-shan — Fishing cormorants —
Parental love amongst the Chinese.

I HAD often desired to inspect a Chinese pagoda, and having ascertained that the Lung-hua pagoda, situated a couple of miles to the south of the Shanghai city, was easily accessible by water, I started one bright afternoon in a steam-launch, and after a short but pleasant trip up the river past the city, the junk-anchorage, and the Anglo-Chinese arsenal, I arrived at the landing-place close to the pagoda. How is it that our preconceived notions of things are so often fated to be rudely crushed when we are brought face to face with the reality? Certain it is that all the

ideas about pagodas which I had formed from pictures, from description, and even from distant views of the buildings themselves, vanished into thin air as I stood at the foot of the Lung-hua pagoda, and noted its rickety condition, its dilapidated galleries, and its neglected, forlorn, and uncouth appearance generally. It did not look as if it had ever been a "thing of beauty," and I should be very sorry to pronounce it a "joy for ever." A smiling native stood at the door with a bunch of keys in his hand, and judging from the critical manner in which he surveyed us, he was probably weighing in his mind the amount of the "cumshaw" he was likely to receive from us in return for his arduous task of turning a key in the lock, and ushering us into the sacred precincts of the pagoda. Being apparently satisfied on this point the janitor opened the door and we entered. The interior was even less prepossessing in appearance than the exterior, and the dusty walls had been rendered doubly objectionable by the host of names which previous visitors, with a view to a

dubious immortality, had inscribed upon them. "John Smith, 1865," "Ada Robinson," "She is a duck," and other interesting legends stared down upon us from every side; and as the walls looked tottering, the floors shaky, and the staircase unsound, I abstained from going to the top, whence a good view of the surrounding country is said to be obtained, and hurried back to the open air.

Close to the pagoda, and probably originally connected with it, stands a small joss-house or temple, and on our approaching the door of this building we found that service was going on. In the centre of the temple, close to the wall opposite the entrance, we noticed the altar, with a large statue of Buddha upon it. On each side of the altar a row of Buddhist priests, with their shaven heads and long flowing yellow robes, were ranged facing each other, droning out alternate verses of some psalm-like prayers. On the right of the altar was a priest, who struck a drum occasionally; whilst another seemed to keep time with a stick on a small round hollow instrument made of bamboo.

Another priest stood in front of the altar, prostrating himself occasionally, and at one portion of the service he took from the altar a small cup, containing what appeared to be water, and after praying for some time, he carried the cup outside, and poured its contents slowly over a square stone which stood near the temple door. This mysterious operation over, he snapped his fingers three times, and then forming a kind of ring with the fingers of both hands, he held them for a moment extended towards the stone, turned round, and proceeded once more to his place before the altar, where he resumed his prayers and prostrations. After some little time all the priests began walking in procession round and round the interior of the temple, murmuring prayers, and headed by a lame old man, whose appearance detracted greatly, so far as we were concerned, from the gravity of the situation. His under-lip protruded very considerably, and as he limped along, busily manipulating a heavy string of beads which he held in front, it was difficult

to restrain a smile. I was curious to see the last of the ceremony, but the evening was on the wane, and as the monotonous procession still continued, we retired to explore the other sights of the place, none of which, however, are worthy of special record. Passing the door of the temple some time afterwards, we found the priests as indefatigable as ever in making their rounds. And so we left them in the gloaming, and wondered when their pious peregrinations would come to an end.

In the neighbourhood of the Lung-hua pagoda are many extensive peach-orchards, and in the spring when the peach-trees are in bloom, the appearance of the whole country-side is extremely beautiful; viewed from an elevated position the place looks like a sea of pink blossoms stretching out on every side. At this season of the year numbers of "house-boats," European and native, filled with merry holiday-makers, may be seen in the little river leading to the pagoda. Some of the European house-boats are fitted up with much

taste and elegance; they are principally used for shooting excursions, the country for many hundreds of miles round Shanghai being full of game, and altogether destitute of roads on which an ordinary European vehicle could be driven. The absence of roads, however, is compensated for by the extraordinary network of "creeks," or canals, which intersect the entire country, and a journey into the interior of the Shanghai district as it is frequently made by Europeans in their nicely-fitted house-boats, is an exceedingly comfortable, not to say pleasant, undertaking. My only experience of such travelling was gained by a visit to the Fung-shan hills, some fifteen or twenty miles distant, "*the hills*" as they are termed by the Shanghai residents, who, living in the midst of a vast plain, are glad to feast their eyes occasionally on these modest hillocks, which form the only break to the dead level of the surrounding country. On the occasion I refer to, the state of the tide, according to the "low-dah," or head-boatman, necessitated our sending the house-boat on in advance

to Sikkawei, the site of a famous college managed by French priests, and the farthest point to which the European roads proceed from Shanghai. Favoured by a bright moonlight we drove to Sikkawei after dinner, and soon after embarking we proceeded on our journey. The night air was sufficiently balmy to admit of our sitting on deck, and as we glided along under the shadow of the convent wall we heard the sweet solemn tones of a bell calling the Carmelites to their evening devotions, the bright moon shining from a cloudless sky lighted up the surrounding landscape, and the entire scene, full of peace and beauty, was one not easily forgotten. After we had retired to rest, however, the peacefulness of the night was occasionally broken rather rudely. The creek was narrow, and as often as we met another boat a series of slight collisions was certain to ensue, followed by an interchange of compliments between the sailors of the meeting boats which sounded loud and harsh on our startled ears. Sometimes, too, we were almost flung out of our

berths by an unusually violent bump against the buttress of a bridge, and on these occasions the yellings of the boatmen were neither soft nor melodious. But in spite of these occasional interruptions we managed to secure the requisite amount of sleep, and when we rose next morning we found ourselves in the midst of a scene as different as possible from that which we had left the night before. The water round our boat, unlike the muddy Shanghai river, was beautifully bright and clear; picturesque-looking little cottages stood close to the river-bank surrounded by bamboos and overhanging trees; in front of us rose the hills looking fresh and green, and a little mountain rill, forming tiny cascades as it worked its way down the slopes, made what appeared to us poor dwellers on the plains sweetest of music in the bright morning air. To our great disappointment the day turned out to be one of those unusually hot ones which are occasionally experienced in the month of May, anticipating and rivalling the very hottest days

in July and August. Unprepared as we were for such a sudden burst of heat, we thought it prudent not to expose ourselves to the fierce rays of the sun; and thus we were debarred from the pleasant scamper over the hills which on a cooler day we should have enjoyed so thoroughly. We drew our boat under the shade of some large trees, in a pleasant little nook where the banks were covered with beautiful ferns and wild flowers, and the wistaria in full bloom bent with its white and purple clusters almost down to the water's-edge, and in this charming retreat we alternately read and lounged, like lotos-eaters as we were, through the long scorching day. A cormorant fishing boat coming close to us introduced some little excitement, and for a time we were amused by the movements of the fishing birds and their master. The birds are ranged round the sides of the little boat, to which they are attached by a long string, and true to their instinct, their eyes are intently fixed on the water. When a fish is observed the cormorant

dives after it, and generally succeeds in bringing it back to the boat; but a ring which is tightly fitted to the bird's neck prevents the fish from being swallowed, and thus the master easily secures the prize which the cormorant has brought to the surface. Towards evening we were able to go for a short walk on shore, but as we had arranged to be in Shanghai on the following morning, we were obliged to start on our return journey before sunset; and, travelling as before, during the night, through the narrow creeks, we found ourselves next morning once more sailing through muddy waters, surrounded by an unbroken plain, with no picturesque hill-side to enliven our sight, no rippling mountain-stream to gladden our ears. The mansions of the Shanghai merchant princes presently burst upon our view, the various tea clippers and mail steamers lying at anchor in the river were passed in rapid succession, and in a few minutes we were alongside the Shanghai Bund, in the immediate neighbourhood of our home.

On arriving at the door of our house we were attracted by the piteous sobs of a poor native female whom we observed in the street, holding some tiny clothes neatly folded in her arms, and weeping over them as if her heart would break. My first impression was that she was a beggar, and had hit upon this expedient to attract notice and arouse sympathy; but having sent to inquire, I found that the poor woman's grief was really genuine, that her baby had that morning been buried, and that, distracted with sorrow at her loss, she pressed her departed darling's clothes to her breast, and rushed with them into the street, unconscious of all save the maddening thought that her baby could never be restored to her again.

This is only one of many instances of parental fondness which have come under my observation; even amongst the poorest people I have had frequent opportunity of noticing the loving care bestowed by mothers on their children, and the anguish experienced on the death of an infant child; and

with regard to the better classes I have never observed amongst them any less warm affection for their children than that which prevails amongst ourselves. I know it is customary to assert that the Chinese, as a nation, are void of affection ; and the habit of selling their children, or disposing of them in some more reprehensible manner, through stress of poverty or other causes—though by no means so common in my opinion as some writers would lead us to suppose—gives a colour to the belief that parental love is not to be included amongst the Chinese domestic virtues. But in this matter, as in so many others, a great deal of misconception arises from the habit of forming sweeping conclusions from special and isolated cases, and if the subject were sufficiently investigated it would probably be found that with regard to domestic affections, the Chinese are by no means our inferiors.

CHAPTER XI.

Foo-CHOW—Ku-ahan.

AFTER a residence of fourteen months in Shanghai we were transferred to Foo-chow, and on the 10th May, 1876, we left in the steamer Europe for our new port. The voyage down the coast through the numerous islands which, beginning with the Chusan group, lie thickly along the Chinese shores, was very pleasant, and on the evening of the 12th May we anchored under the shelter of an island at the mouth of the river Min. Soon after we anchored the moon rose bright and full above the hills of the island, and the effect was charming as viewed from the steamer's deck, with Sharp Peak and the mountains on the mainland standing out distinctly against the clear sky, and the intervening sea

looking like a sheet of silver as the moon's bright rays danced over the rippling water. Next morning we proceeded up the river, and in the course of the afternoon we landed at the foreign settlement, which is situated on a hill overlooking the extensive city and suburbs of Foo-chow.

The scenery in the neighbourhood of Foo-chow is justly celebrated; the hills are graceful in form, and are generally plentifully covered with trees, lovely wild flowers, and ferns in endless variety. The inhabitants, too, are in some respects well-favoured. The men are as a rule sturdy and muscular, and the peasant women have ruddy cheeks and well-formed features, and with their bare arms and legs, and hair profusely decorated with natural flowers, they look very picturesque. One feature in the surroundings of Foo-chow is sure to impress itself upon a new arrival: whilst the plains are almost entirely devoted to agriculture, nearly all the hill-sides are taken up with the horseshoe-shaped graves which are peculiar to the south of China. The hill on which the

residences of Europeans are for the most part built, is particularly favoured in this respect; it is in fact one vast cemetery, and until one gets accustomed to the sight it is sure to have a gloomy and depressing effect. The house in which we lived was surrounded on all sides by graves, and it was even impossible to enter the front gate without first treading on the mound which covered the remains of a Chinaman.

During the summer months I had often watched from the verandah of our house a lofty mountain, which is the most conspicuous object in the surrounding landscape, and is called Ku-shan, the "drum mountain." Besides the fact that it is a favourite resort of foreigners, its appearance, its proximity, its constant presence under my observation, giving it the character of an old friend, made me long to attempt its ascent, and form a closer acquaintance with its scenery. Hardly had the cool weather set in before we organised a small party, and starting at eight o'clock in the morning, with the aid of a steam launch we

glided swiftly down the river, and in less than an hour we reached the landing-place, near the foot of the mountain, where sedan-chairs awaited us. A short ride through paddy fields, and past some comfortable-looking farmhouses, brought us to the beginning of the well-formed stone road which leads up to the large Buddhist monastery halfway up the mountain. Leaving our chairs we proceeded to walk up the steps, but before we had managed to climb to any great height the unwonted exercise began to tell, and we were delighted to see at a short distance above us a small white resting-house, with the usual Chinese painted eaves, to which we urged our faltering footsteps, and when we took our seats in the little halting-place we blessed the foresight of the good monks who so wisely consulted for the comfort of their wearied visitors. Again we plodded up the stone steps, and again just as our tired limbs began to demand a halt did a little house, the facsimile of the first one, open its smiling portals and invite us to a most welcome

pause in our climbing. Five of those useful little resting-places are met with on the journey up the mountain, and they reduce the labour of the ascent considerably. At last we came to a comparatively level road; steps, except at rare intervals, were no longer required; large trees, showing signs of much cultivation, began to replace the wild fir-trees which clothe the lower portions of the mountain-side; the appearance of large Chinese characters deftly cut into the rocks by pious hands, and expressing some holy maxim, or the Buddhist invocation: "O me to Fu!" became of more frequent occurrence, and we knew we were close to the monastery.

The approach to the temple leads through an avenue of stately trees, whose wide-spreading branches meet overhead and afford a most delicious shade. The exterior of the building is not very striking, but the large idols in the entrance-hall, the spacious courtyard, and the principal hall of worship are well worth seeing. Like some of "the monks of old," the Ku-shan priests have accom-

modation for visitors who may desire to spend some time in that romantic spot, and in the summer months a few of the guests' rooms are occasionally rented by Europeans, who like the place on account of its comparative coolness and pleasant surroundings. A convenient room was at once allotted to us, and with the wonderful power of adapting themselves to circumstances which Chinese servants show on an emergency, our domestics had in a remarkably short time a complete "tiffin" laid out for us; nothing seemed to have been forgotten, and everything was in as good order as if we were in our own dining-room. After tiffin we sallied forth to explore the "lions" of the place. First of all we visited the belfry, where two old priests, who looked quite happy in their dismal tower, spent all their time in tolling at intervals of a few minutes, day and night, the solemn monastery bell. The priests take this monotonous duty in turns, and they consider their occupation a most praiseworthy and heroic one. We were told of an old blind priest

in a Pekin monastery who believed that every time he tolled the bell he saved a soul! and it is no doubt some such pious belief which renders endurable such dreary work. The pond where the sacred fish are kept was next visited, and the attendant priest having supplied us with strings of little round biscuits, we threw a few into the water, and in an instant the surface of the pond near where we stood, which had been unruffled before, became literally alive with thousands of voracious fish, with their mouths wide open ready to swallow any amount of biscuits we chose to throw them. The fish must have been very hungry on that occasion, for when a gentleman of our party, wishing, as he said, to introduce some variety into their food—rather cruelly I thought—flung into the midst of the finny multitude the end of his cigar, it was ravenously swallowed, and I fancy at least one fish must have retired in deep disgust with the “foreign Barbarian.”

After a hurried visit to a small temple connected with the monastery, and situated in a

most romantic mountain dell, where a bell is constantly tolled by the aid of a water-wheel, we returned to the hall of worship in time to see the priests assemble for their afternoon devotions. About a hundred of these votaries of Buddha came trooping in with their long yellow robes, their hands joined in front of their breasts and clasping their rosaries, and their shaven heads bent reverently forward. The head priest, a jolly rosy-cheeked individual, who looked as if he occasionally enjoyed something better than mere Buddhist monastery fare, and who had clung tenaciously to us from the moment of our arrival, and was most attentive in supplying all our wants, did not join in the service; and when we, tired of the dreary chanting turned to leave, the worthy abbot politely escorted us to the gate, and with many a smile he closed his chubby hand over the *douceur*, the prospect of which had all day long filled his pious soul with comfort, and stimulated his amiability and good-nature. Our return journey was soon accomplished, and we reached the foreign settlement of Foo-chow just as darkness was setting in.

CHAPTER XII.

An inundation—A typhoon—A sad bereavement—
An extensive fire.

IN the June of 1876 Foo-chow was visited by one of the most disastrous floods that had taken place in the valley of the Min within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Tradition tells of dire calamities inflicted by inundations in the remote past, and the memories of many natives dimly recall the horrors of a fearful flood which worked incalculable misery on the inhabitants of the neighbourhood in 1834. But not even in 1834 did the river at Foo-chow rise within one foot of its highest point in the overflow of 1876, and it may be questioned if ever the Water Demon dealt such a deadly

blow on the Min district as the one which came under our observation.

For two days rain had been falling steadily, and the river continued to rise gradually until the afternoon of the third day, when it flooded all the low-lying streets along the river-bank on Nan-tai, and washed over a portion of the more elevated Bund in front of the riverside hong. On the succeeding night the freshet continued to increase in volume and strength—the flood-tide after midnight adding to the bulk of water—until three o'clock on the following morning, when the river fairly washed over the top of the celebrated “bridge of ten thousand ages,” as well as the smaller bridge connecting Nan-tai with Chung-chou (Middle Island), and then the noise of the impetuous torrent was like one long-continued peal of thunder. It is marvellous how the bridge managed to sustain the fearful pressure of water brought against it, only a portion of the parapet having been washed away. The bridge, which is about one quarter of a mile long by fourteen feet wide, and rests upon

forty solid stone buttresses, is said to have been built in the Sung dynasty, about the year 1000 A.D., at a cost of five millions of dollars; and the superstitious character which the Chinese are fond of ascribing to its origin and erection will gain new strength from this latest proof of its solidity, whilst a fresh title to the fanciful name it bears has now been acquired.

For hundreds of families, that night must have been a fearful one. Many boats with their living inmates are supposed to have been driven from their moorings, and in the height of the flood carried beyond the hope of rescue by the force of the torrent, until they were dashed against the bridge or some other obstacle, and so perished. How many of the immense boat population, and of the people in charge of cargo-boats, lost their lives in this way will probably never be known.

On shore the misery was still greater, as it was more widespread. The country looked like one vast lake; and not only were all the young rice crops in the fertile valleys which surround Foo-chow

destroyed, but the houses in those localities had either fallen in, or were swept bodily away, or more than half submerged; and the fate of the inhabitants in many cases can easily be surmised by the many dead bodies—sometimes in groups of families—that were seen floating down from the upper part of the river.

Some wonderful escapes are chronicled. A large wardrobe was observed floating down amongst the débris of a household, and from the open door a human hand was seen waving for assistance. Fortunately the piece of furniture was not in the very centre of the current, so that a sampan was enabled to go at some risk to the rescue, and a poor woman, half dead with fear and immersion, was taken from the wardrobe, and brought safely to the shore. Had the wardrobe been carried as far as the bridge, certain death would of course have overtaken her.

At another part of the river a tub was brought to the shore, and in it were found two little shivering children, having attached to them a notice

hurriedly written, setting forth the whereabouts of their former home, and requesting those who might discover them to send the children back.

When the flood was at its height, many people noticed a native house containing a number of people floating down the river, and a man on the top wringing his hands in agony; no help could be extended to them, on account of the force of the torrent, and it was with terrible suspense the spectators awaited the impending tragedy at the bridge, to which the house was being hurried. Just, however, as the house reached the top of Chung-chou, it was borne by a sudden turn of the current towards a tree which projected considerably from the top of the island, and in an instant the man who was on the roof flung himself into the branches of the tree, and was saved; whilst the house with the remaining victims was borne swiftly on to the bridge, where it was dashed to pieces, and nothing was seen of the unhappy inmates.

In the thickly-populated island of Chung-chou


much distress must have occurred. From the hill-sides of the foreign settlement the inhabitants of the island could be seen congregated on the roofs of their houses, the water having apparently reached even the upper apartments, and as no provision could have been made for such a sudden calamity, and as articles of food were largely destroyed, it is believed that the pangs of hunger were added to the sufferings of the poor people, and some charitable natives at once organised such measures as they could think of for their relief. It was truly heart-rending to us to gaze upon a scene so full of misery, and be unable to lend a helping hand.

The damage to European buildings was comparatively small. One godown, fortunately without much merchandise in it, and a foreign-built house used by Chinese, collapsed; boundary walls were washed down, gardens were destroyed, and some tea waiting for shipment was slightly damaged; but the more solid construction of their houses secured Europeans from any very serious calamity.

Of course the residences of the great majority of the Europeans, which are situated on "the hill," entirely escaped from any injury. The godowns of Hop Chune and Tung Hing, two of the leading Chinese teamen, were however destroyed, together with a very large quantity of tea that was stored in them; and when the damage to houses and property in the city, and the loss of large boats with their cargoes *en route* from the tea districts, and the destruction of crops, are taken into consideration, Chinamen do not hesitate to estimate the entire loss caused by the floods at millions of dollars.

At Pagoda Anchorage the force of the current was so great that several of the tea steamers dragged their anchors, and got up steam in case of accident, and one steamer lost an anchor and about thirty fathoms of chain, and was obliged to drop below the shipping.

After three days the flood began to abate; sampans no longer plied for hire between the foot of the hill and the Bund, the lower roads



and streets once more appeared, and in a few days afterwards the river returned to its normal state. For some time, however, the appearance of all the valleys in the neighbourhood was sad in the extreme; ruins were seen on every side, and the plains which a week before were clad in a mantle of most lovely green, were now one mass of mud and rotting vegetation. Although no reliable information with regard to the extent of the damage done by the inundation could be obtained, it was only too evident that even in our immediate neighbourhood hundreds of poor families became destitute, and hundreds, some say thousands, of lives were lost. It is said that the energetic Governor Ting spent three days and three nights upon the city walls during the continuance of the floods, aiding the distressed, and repressing plunder. Seventeen looters had their heads struck off by this stern official, and the city magistrate himself was ordered out to execution for laxity in supplying the people's wants, and was only saved by the

earnest supplications of the other mandarins. In fact, confusion and misery were seen on every side, the homeless were crying for shelter, the starving for food, and the orphans for protection, and the sorrow and suffering which then visited the "Banyan city" and its neighbourhood will probably be felt whilst the present generation endures.

Scarcely had four weeks elapsed since the valley of the Min had been laid waste by the disastrous inundation, and the inhabitants of Foo-chow and its neighbourhood had barely had time to recover from the effects of that calamity when a violent storm, showing all the symptoms of a "typhoon," broke over the same ill-starred region, causing a fearful amount of misery on the river and on shore. The summer months in the south of China are often marked by these fierce gales known in the East as "typhoons," a word intended to represent the sound of two Chinese words signifying "large wind," in Cantonese, "tai-foong." Much serious damage by land and sea is inflicted

by these terrible storms, and during the typhoon season those who "go down to the sea in ships" are obliged to exercise a constant watch for what experience has taught them to be the coming signs of their most formidable enemy. Typhoons, at least in their most violent form, rarely visit places on the Chinese coast farther north than Swatow or Amoy; but occasionally they extend as far as Foo-chow, carrying the usual havoc and desolation in their train.

The morning of the 31st July, 1876, looked dark and threatening; and as the day advanced the heavy clouds that were borne swiftly across the sky began to assume a more gloomy and ominous appearance; rain began to fall in torrents, and by four o'clock in the afternoon the wind, which had been gradually increasing, blew in fearful gusts and with a fury which baffles all description. Large trees were torn up from their roots, and their branches carried through the air like so many scraps of paper; many of the frail native dwellings were

completely destroyed, and the strong European houses in some instances had portions of their roofs carried away, and their interiors damaged by the deluge of rain which came pouring in. Europeans coming home from their offices found to their disgust that sedan-chairs could not be borne, and that umbrellas were impracticable; so they were obliged to battle their way as best they could, unprotected from the heavy down-pour, through flooded paths, in the teeth of the blinding storm, at the risk of being brained by falling tiles, or maimed by the broken branches of trees. My husband returned home in a condition so pitiable, his garments torn, mud-begrimed and saturated with wet, that his nearest friends could hardly recognise him.

On the river the disasters were many and serious : cargo-boats and sampans were wrecked, and some twenty or thirty up-country boats, laden with tea, were driven against the bridge and destroyed. It is difficult in China, on an occasion of this kind, to arrive at a correct estimate of the

number of lives lost; but it is known that many of the boat population were drowned, and the loss of property, and the misery caused amongst the poorer classes, must have been immense.

Whilst the typhoon was at its height, our house, a two-storied bungalow in a much-exposed situation, shook in an alarming manner, but fortunately it withstood the violent storm bravely; and although I narrowly escaped being stunned once or twice by large pieces of the ceiling which fell suddenly on the floor beside me, no serious damage was sustained by the house or its inmates. As evening set in the wind began to abate, and the wild tempestuous day was succeeded by a calm and peaceful night.

On the day after the storm I was touched by the shrill cries of a female close to our bungalow. Amongst people of sympathetic temperament a cry of anguish is always sure to create a feeling of pain in the hearer oftentimes as keen as that experienced by the actual sufferer. The whining of a dog in pain, the plaintive wailing of any

afflicted animal, invariably strikes a tender chord in the breasts of most people; but when the sound of grief comes from one of our own species—from a tender infant, or still more from a full-grown man or woman—our very heart-strings seem to be touched, and the utmost sympathy is felt for the afflicted one. The gloomy countenance and mute sorrow of a man who has met with some heavy calamity are sad to behold, but the demonstrative grief of a woman under similar circumstances, from the nature of things touches us, as a rule, more acutely. In China we have all listened with profound emotion to the sad lamentations of native women for the loss of some near relation, and in Foo-chow there are almost daily opportunities for sympathising with the many poor females who come to weep over the graves of departed friends. Words fail to describe the bitterness and the violence of the grief sometimes exhibited, and the heart-rending cries which ever and anon pierce the air on such occasions. At first the hearing of such doleful

sounds had a most depressing effect on me, but after a few months I became so familiar with the occurrence that my depression vanished, though my sympathy remained. On this occasion, however, the cries of the woman appeared to be more piercing than usual; she groaned, howled, and screeched in a manner which not only struck terror into the hearts of all who heard her, but left no doubt whatever as to the genuineness of her grief. Without knowing it she was following the advice of Malcolm in "Macbeth:"

Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break.

I hastened to the verandah, full of earnest pity for the poor creature, and wondering how many of her nearest and dearest she could have recently lost to account for the bitterness of her sorrow. I called a servant to interpret for me the impassioned utterances which fell from the distracted woman's lips. "Has she lost her husband?" "No." "Her father or mother?" "No." "Her

child?" "No." "What then is the cause of her awful misery?" The answer came out slowly but distinctly: "Yesterday that largey win come she have loossee one smallo pig!"

Foo-chow would seem to have been peculiarly accursed during the year of grace 1876, or perhaps there may have been some truth in the statement of the native governor in one of his flowery proclamations, that his sins had brought affliction upon the people; for whilst the terrors of the great flood and the disastrous typhoon were fresh in the minds of all, another destroying element appeared upon the scene; wind and water had apparently done their worst, and now an alarming fire broke out to complete the work of devastation. Fortunately the fire took place during daylight, when the weather was calm, for had it occurred during the night, or had a strong wind been blowing at the time, the disaster might have been much greater. As it was, the conflagration spread in an amazingly short time over a space of ground

two miles in length, and thickly covered with houses; and the sight of such an immense fire, seen from the hill overlooking the city, suggestive though it was of so much misery, was truly grand and awful. Great misfortunes are often brought about by trifling events, and this fearful calamity was said to have been caused by an unheeded spark which flew from the fire at which an old woman was cooking her modest midday meal, an incident which called forth from the editor of the local newspaper the facetious remark: "Woman, lovely woman, is at the bottom of every evil." A fire in a Chinese city is all the more dangerous on account of the inflammability of the houses, composed as they are principally of wood, and the narrowness of the streets, which not only assists the progress of the flames, but impedes the motions of the firemen with their clumsy and ineffective fire-engines. Thieves take advantage of such occasions to sally forth, armed with knives and spears, in search of plunder; and what with the

roaring of the flames, the din of gongs, and the yelling of the excited populace, a fire in a Chinese city is an event not likely to be soon forgotten.

CHAPTER XIII.

Wu-shih Shan—Chinese streets—Horse-racing—Chinese lepers
—Chinese doctors.

IN the city of Foo-chow there is a building situated on an eminence, and surrounded by park-like grounds, which has since the opening of the port to European trade been in the possession of the British Government, and is known as Wu-shih Shan (Five-rock Hill); it is used occasionally as a residence by the British Consul, and its cool situation, and the splendid views it commands on every side, render it a favourable resort in the summer months. Its great drawbacks are its distance from the foreign settlement, and the disagreeable road by which it is approached. The journey to the city is accomplished in sedan-chairs

borne by three coolies, who carry you through the narrow crowded Chinese streets at a pace which is really surprising, considering the number of obstacles which are constantly met with. Here an itinerant cook blocks up the road with his movable restaurant, and oblivious of all save his desire for customers, beats his tiny gong, and invites all and sundry to come and partake of his tempting viands; farther on a wily gambler has established a table, and commences to reap a rich harvest from the unsophisticated natives who crowd around him; now a fruit-vendor's stall protrudes inconveniently on the thoroughfare; now a fearfully maimed cripple occupies the very centre of the street, and appeals loudly to the sympathy of the passers-by; or, as happened to us on one occasion, the way is blocked by a large crowd of natives surrounding an old Chinese impostor, who, dressed in what he considers European costume, all rags and tatters, appeals to the half-believing half-doubting Chinamen, to extend their sympathy to the poor distressed

"foreigner," far away from home and friends; then perhaps a mandarin's cortége comes from the opposite direction, meets you in the very narrowest part of the street, and necessitates your chair being jammed into the open front of a pork butcher's, or oil merchant's, or coffin manufacturer's establishment. All these, and a thousand other obstacles, are, however, somehow disposed of; but the constant yelling of your own coolies in their desire to obtain a clear passage, the yells from other chair-coolies equally anxious to clear a way for themselves; the cries of people jostled, and in some instances upset, in their struggles to get along; the yelping of curs, and the screaming of women and children, all raise a din which baffles description. Add to all this the horrible smells which are constantly encountered, and the inconveniences of the two hours' journey to Wu-shih Shan may be partly understood. It must be said, however, that the magnificent view which one obtains at the end of the journey amply repays the trouble of getting there. From the front verandah an immense valley

is to be seen studded with picturesque farmhouses, the river Min winding along gracefully for miles, and reflecting from its surface the rays of the bright Eastern sun. From an elevation behind the house an admirable birdseye view of Foo-chow city is obtained, with its interminable network of narrow streets, and its acres of tiled roofs, interspersed here and there with the loftier yamêns and temples; whilst all round the horizon the distant mountains make a graceful background to the picture. The exploration of Wu-shih Shan being completed, you take to your chair again, and then commence the horrors of the return journey, which are all the more intensified if darkness have in the meantime supervened. After emerging once more from the crowded, dirty, narrow streets, it is with a feeling of relief and thankfulness that one breathes again a purer atmosphere, and seeks the comfort and repose of home.

The same long and disagreeable road which leads to Wu-shih Shan has to be traversed by those who desire to visit the Foo-chow racecourse.

Nearly every little community of Europeans in China has its racecourse, and the periodical race meetings are great events, which, for weeks before and after the friendly contests, monopolise the conversation of the port to the exclusion of all other topics. The residents of Foo-chow are quite as ardent lovers of the turf as their compatriots in other ports, and their ardour is all the more remarkable as they have hitherto been unable to provide themselves with a convenient racecourse,* and are obliged to content themselves with the temporary use of the Tartar parade-ground, kindly lent to them annually by the Chinese authorities. The distance from the European settlement is so great that, during training time, the owners of racing ponies are obliged to live at the course, and be satisfied with such quarters as they can procure for themselves and their steeds amongst the Chinese surroundings of the place.

* Since the above was written, a suitable course has, I believe, been obtained in the immediate neighbourhood of the European settlement.

In the neighbourhood of the parade-ground is a remarkable village entirely inhabited by lepers. These loathsome beings are completely tabooed by the other Chinese; they are obliged to live apart from all others, they can only marry amongst themselves, and the race is perpetuated and established as so many despised outcasts, strangers in the land of their birth. As no one would use any implement, much less consume any article of food, contaminated by the touch of these poor wretches, they are obliged to seek a living in the manufacture of mats, matting, and similar articles, which are trodden upon and not handled; and on the rare occasions when they are visited by anyone desirous of making a purchase, a chair, strictly reserved for the purpose, is drawn down by a rope from the ceiling and placed at the disposal of the customer, on whose departure the chair is again drawn up, so as to be out of the reach of the regular inmates of the house, whose touch would defile it.

It is a custom almost universal in China,

for those who are comfortably circumstanced, and who have not been blessed with children, to purchase and bring up as their own the children of poor parents. But so great is the dread of leprosy in Foo-chow, that when a child is brought for purchase, it has, in spite of the healthy appearance it may present, to undergo what is considered an infallible test as to whether it possesses the seeds of the disease, before a contract can be effected. The child is placed over a fire, in which are burned certain herbs said to have the property of at once developing on the skin of a diseased person the spots which indicate the malady; and if Chinese doctors are to be believed, this is indeed a desperate ordeal, for they say that if the victim be really a leper, he seldom lives long after the spots have, under the strong influence of the herbs, made their appearance.

The allusion to this unpleasant subject brings to my mind an erroneous view which I, in common I believe with many Europeans, formerly entertained regarding Chinese doctors. Until I

made inquiries on the subject in Foo-chow, I was under the impression that all native physicians were in the habit of receiving fees according to results—a fee in the event of the patient's recovery, and no fee in case the sick person died. I find that it is only the lowest class of quacks who adopt such methods. In large cities there are many well-known doctors who receive fees whatever be the result of their professional aid; and in Foo-chow the leading physician, as he may be termed, a man named Ch'en, the scion of a highly respectable family in the neighbourhood, receives fees which would be considered high even in this country. The Chinese make almost the same distinction that we do between physicians and surgeons; they have their Nei-k'o, or those who treat internal complaints, and their Wai-k'o, or those who attend to external ailments, and their Nei-k'o (physicians) are held in much higher repute than practitioners of the other class, and command much higher fees. Physicians in good practice have their hours for consultation at their houses, generally in the

morning, during which their valuable advice may be obtained by the poorer class of patients for sums varying from 500 to 1,200 cash, or, say, two to five shillings of our money. Then at an appointed hour the doctor in his sedan-chair starts on his rounds, and for each visit he charges something like a guinea; but large sums are required for visiting patients at a distance, the fees being generally paid at the time of the visit. The Chinese have also their Yen-k'o, or oculists, and there is besides in large towns a class of practitioners who devote themselves almost exclusively to infantile disorders. I need hardly add that, except in these distinctive titles, there is no similarity whatever between the Chinese system of medicine and ours. In China anatomy is unknown, and the most successful practitioner there would undoubtedly fail to obtain the very lowest certificate which the most lenient College of Surgeons in Western countries could award.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Canton Club—A Chinese dinner.

IN all large Chinese cities, the natives of the various leading business centres own extensive buildings which answer the purposes of club, exchange, theatre, and joss-house, as occasion may require, and are known by the name of the district to which the owners belong: for instance, the Ningpo Club, the Fukien Club. At Foo-chow the Canton club-house is the best specimen of a Chinese building I have yet seen, whether its substantial structure, its gorgeous—not to say florid—ornamentation, or the excellent order in which it is preserved, be taken into consideration. But it is during the Chinese seventh moon, when, as I have already stated, devotions in honour of deceased

ancestors are practised, that this building shows to greatest advantage. On such an occasion, at the invitation of a respectable Cantonese, a party of us visited the club-house. We went, according to arrangement, after dinner, so as to have an opportunity of viewing the place by lamp-light, and I must say that my anticipations were more than realised by the gorgeous scene which we beheld. The extensive building was profusely, and, on the whole, tastefully decorated with flowers, natural and artificial, Japanese shrubs trained to the most fantastic shapes, rich banners, splendid vases, and handsome silk embroidery; whilst the entire scene was brilliantly illuminated by lamps of all sizes and patterns. One immense lamp hanging from the centre of the principal apartment attracted a good deal of attention; it was decorated with a number of small figures representing human beings, which, by some mechanical contrivance, continued to move round and round. Another lamp proved still more attractive to the Chinese; attached to it was a

large globe filled with water, in which numbers of tiny gold-fish swam about, and in the centre of the globe was a smaller one in which two pretty little birds were hopping about unconcernedly, so that birds and fishes appeared to be disporting themselves in the most friendly manner in one common element. The immense crowds which thronged the various apartments were exceedingly well conducted, and although I was the only female visible in the building at the time, no rudeness of any kind was attempted during the entire visit.

The building just described, amongst the many useful purposes to which it is applied, is often used by members or their friends as a place for giving entertainments on a large scale. A gentleman who was acquainted with the Fantai, or provincial treasurer, of Foo-chow—next to the governor the highest mandarin in the province—invited him to a dinner in the Canton Club, and asked us and most of the Europeans in the place to meet him. I had often desired to par-

take of a Chinese meal, and I was glad to avail myself of this, the first opportunity which presented itself of testing the virtues of an Oriental *menu*. At the appointed hour about forty Europeans, fourteen of whom were ladies, assembled, and as the great man who was the principal guest on the occasion thought it necessary to keep us all waiting, we had quite an hour at our disposal for the purpose of inspecting the beauties of the place. On the arrival of the Fantai, accompanied by two smaller mandarins (one a Taotai, the head of the local Board of Trade, and the other the well known Tong King-Sing, the head of the new Chinese steamer company), we took our places at the long table prepared for us, and the long expected Chinese viands soon began to appear. No sooner were we seated than the servants set about filling the little cups which stood in front of the guests with a decoction which was described to us as Shao Hsing wine; it was poured from earthenware pots which looked exactly like tea-pots, and it was intended no doubt to whet our

appetites for the good things that were to follow. Whilst we were all amusing ourselves with efforts at manipulating the "chop-sticks"—two narrow pieces of ivory about nine inches long, which, held between the fingers of one hand, were to do the duty both of knife and fork—the first course came on, a gelatinous-looking substance served up in little Chinese bowls; and now who has courage enough to try the uninviting morsel for the benefit of his neighbours? One intrepid individual, after eyeing his bowl for some time, boldly plunged his chop-sticks in, extracted a tiny portion, tasted it cautiously, and pronounced it to be excellent birds'-nest! Stimulated by his example we all swallowed a small quantity, and then we discovered that our first course consisted of sharks'-fins and lobsters—a revealment which shook our confidence in our first informant terribly. The second luxury was Szechuen fungus and shred fowl; then came a sort of omelette made of pigeons'-eggs; then soup, flavoured with the brains of the dog-fish; then a kind of minced

dumpling; and then came a dish which made some of us almost jump from our seats—sea-slug, known generally by the more euphonious name of *bêche-de-mer*. Up to this point the dishes were, as a rule, removed untasted by the foreign guests, and we amused ourselves with picking up by the aid of our chop-sticks, the water-chestnuts and other miscellaneous things left permanently on the table. The sea-slugs were followed in succession by pork sausages, fowl served with spinach, and fried shrimps, and these, too, were passed by in a manner hardly complimentary to our host's culinary artist. We were next tempted with almond tea, but without success; then came more fungus, and then, to the joy of many, some plain roast fowl, which, though rather oily, was, to anyone with an appetite, eatable. At this stage of the proceedings some kind Samaritan introduced iced champagne, which in a crowded room, on a Chinese summer day, proved a welcome addition to the native feast. At the same time another gentleman, who was probably guided by previous

experience, cautiously produced, and passed along secretly under the table from hand to hand, a box of sandwiches, which were thoroughly appreciated by a chosen few; and our Chinese friends at a little distance from us, seeing that we were enjoying the smuggled food, thought, no doubt, we were showing a due regard for the flavour of some of their own cherished dainties.

But the long list of dishes was not yet complete; the roast fowl was succeeded by stewed loquats (a kind of fruit), next came some greasy mutton, then a roast sucking pig—which was appreciated—and the sixteenth course consisted of sliced roast duck. If the numerous dishes were not freely partaken of by the Western Barbarians, the Celestials who were present did ample justice to everything. The Fantai had prepared himself for the onslaught by divesting himself of his state robes, and between the courses he generally indulged in a pipe, which was handed to him by one of his attendants; a further specimen of Chinese etiquette was exhibited to

at the close of the repast, when a servant brought a dirty-looking wooden pail full of steaming hot water, and a dark coarse cloth, which latter the mandarins, whilst seated at table, each in turn dipped in the water, and then mopped their unctuous faces in the most unconcerned manner! On the whole I rose from the Chinese feast, pleased that my curiosity had at last been satisfied, but with the firm conviction that I should never again be tempted to go through such a trying ordeal. I ought, however, to add that my experience, as narrated above, is hardly a fair test of the merits of Chinese cookery in its highest branches; for I have often been told of the refined little dinners which many Chinese officials know how to give in their *yamêns* to their European male friends, at which every dish is thoroughly enjoyable, and is served in a manner to satisfy the most fastidious taste.

CHAPTER XV.

Scenery on the river Min—Preparation of the tea-leaf—A Chinese *séance*—A boat excursion—Startling rumours—Departure from Foo-chow.

THE Min, the river on which Foo-chow stands, can boast of some of the most lovely scenery that it is possible to conceive, and if the district through which it flows were not so distant, the Rhine would have to look to its laurels, and the attractions of many famous European haunts would find serious rivals in the many beautiful spots which crowd the picturesque valley through which this lovely river flows. The European residents often avail themselves of the opportunities they have at their command of spending a few days amongst such splendid scenery in the exceedingly

comfortable house-boats—yachts they might be more correctly termed—which they keep for the purpose. Two days, or three at the outside, are sufficient to enable the tourist to visit the famous Rapids, and the still more famous Buddhist monastery at Yun-Foo, the journey thither being passed amongst ever-varying scenes of tranquil beauty, the glassy waters of the river reflecting the lofty hills, which, covered from head to foot with waving forests, rise abruptly from either side of the stream; the windings of the river and the mountainous banks often cause the traveller to fancy that he is in the midst of a lovely lake, surrounded on all sides by picturesque hills, without any perceptible outlet, and at such times a hushed quiet seems to fall upon the scene, broken only by the scream of some mountain bird roused from its solitary reverie, or by the measured splash of the oars and the quaint chorus of the boatmen, as, in the almost certain absence of a breeze, they urge the boat slowly along against the stream under the shadows of the lofty hills.

Another trip which occupies about the same length of time, and which is equally remarkable for the variety of lovely scenery it affords, is one to Pei-ling, the nearest tea district, where the tea plant may be seen flourishing, and where, at the proper seasons, the various preparations of the tea-leaf, the picking, the drying, the sifting, etc., may be witnessed. I have often thought that if people at home, who sip with such satisfaction their cup of favourite Bohea, were to see the manipulation which the tea-leaf is obliged to undergo before it leaves the Flowery Land, they would hardly relish their beverage as much as they do. In fact, *manipulation* is not always the correct word to use in this connection ; for, certainly as far as the cheaper kinds of tea are concerned, natives do not always find it convenient to use their hands in the various processes of turning, mixing, and packing the leaf. But I must desist, lest I should be the means of robbing some afternoon meetings of such innocent pleasure as may be derived from "the cup that cheers, but not inebriates."

Some miles above the city the Min separates into two branches, which however meet again at Pagoda Anchorage, where the European vessels lie, thus forming the island, some twenty miles long by five or six miles wide, on which the majority of the European residents live. A fairly well-kept road extends about two miles into the hilly country to the south of the settlement, and along this road of an afternoon may be seen almost the entire community—some on foot, some on horseback, others in open sedan-chairs—enjoying the cool fresh breeze and the charming views of the surrounding country. A little beyond the ravine which generally forms the farthest limit of an evening's stroll, the road joins the native highway—formed of large blocks of granite, many of them loose and uneven—which leads through the paddy fields to Yung-kee, at the opposite side of the island. When up-country trips are undertaken, it is generally along this path the excursionists first proceed, so as to join their boats at Yung-kee, whence they can proceed without any impediments from tides or bridges to the places they wish to visit.

On one of the excursions made by us across the island our attention was drawn to a small joss-house, or temple, on the roadside, round the door of which a crowd of excited natives, male and female, stood. Curious to see what was going on at that early hour (6 A.M.), we stopped our little procession of chair-bearers and coolies, and hastened to the door of the temple, where a strange scene was revealed to us. Inside the door sat a native with his back to the altar and with his eyes closed, gesticulating in a most frantic manner, and in an affected tone, such as actors use on the Chinese stage, giving utterance to words that were eagerly listened to by all, and were written down by a man who stood at the speaker's right. The central figure was a medium, supposed to be for the time "possessed" by some deity, who adopted this manner of replying to the eager questions of a votary; and the peculiar tone and gesture of the speaker were supposed to be those of the deity. The power of becoming thus the representative and the mouthpiece of some particular "joss" is said to be an uncommon gift, and it is only after much prayer and ceremony

that the inspiration, ecstasy, or whatever it may be called, comes on. Whilst in his ecstatic state the medium often works himself up to a pitch of frenzy which awes the ignorant lookers-on, and adds fuel to their superstitious belief. On some occasions the medium cuts his tongue, and with the blood which flows from the wound writes, or has written for him, his oracular decisions. It may perhaps be some consolation to know that ours is not the only country in the world where spiritualism has its eccentric admirers, and where a clever and not over-scrupulous medium can manage to eke out a living from the credulity or superstition of a weak-minded public.

It was a positive relief to get away from a scene so harrowing to our common sense, to breathe again the fresh pure air of morning, and revel in the joyous surroundings which accompanied us on our onward journey—the merry singing of birds welcoming the glad sunshine, the bright gleams lighting up the neighbouring hills, the banks of white mist which still hung over some of the deeper valleys, half

concealing, half revealing the little hamlets that nestled there, the plaintive lowing of cattle calling on their lagging offspring to follow up the hill, the loud barking of the village watch-dogs startled at the approach of strangers, and a thousand other glad sights and sounds proclaiming the awakening of Nature and Nature's children to another day of life and duty. Arriving at Yung-kee we found our house-boat awaiting us, and after embarking we sped along under the influence of a light breeze past some very pretty scenery, until we came to "the island joss-house," a picturesque little temple built on a rock in the middle of the stream. Turning soon after into the left branch of the river we glided down with the current in our favour until we reached the bridge of the Cloudy Hills. The evening being then far advanced we anchored and dined, after which we got under way again, and the night being calm and balmy with a bright moon overhead we sat on deck, and with song and story beguiled the time in which the last six miles of our little trip were accomplished.

Occasionally startling rumours, some of them

of such a circumstantial nature as to make them doubly alarming, were circulated at Foo-chow which unhinged my nerves for the time. Troubles, trivial enough in themselves but calculated to excite an ignorant rabble, had arisen, and these being exaggerated were said to have inflamed the angry passions of the Chinese mob to such an extent that a general massacre of all Europeans was resolved upon. On one occasion a few inflammatory placards were posted on the city walls, and it was said that even a day was appointed for the destruction of us all; and when we reflected on our helpless and isolated state, a mere handful of Europeans (including a number of women and children), whose unprotected houses are scattered over an extensive hill, with an immense and often turbulent native population in our immediate neighbourhood, it is not to be wondered that, with ever so slight a foundation, a state of alarm should at times be experienced. On the occasion referred to, the arrival of an English man-of-war, brought up from her usual anchorage twelve miles down the

river, tended to allay our apprehensions, and the day said to be appointed for our extermination passed without any unpleasant result.

After a stay of six months in Foo-chow, we learned that we had to proceed to Takow in South Formosa, and it was with much regret that we said farewell to the pleasant little circle of acquaintances we had formed during our comparatively short residence on the banks of the Min. On the morning of our departure, as we were in the act of saying good-bye to the friends who had come to see us off at the jetty, long strings of fire-crackers, with which the Custom House railings had been festooned, were discharged, and the noise for at least ten minutes was positively deafening. Our kind native friends had adopted this form of showing their respect and wishing us God-speed on our journey.

CHAPTER XVI.

AMOY—Crossing the Formosan Channel—Fisher Island light-house—Arrival at Takow.

WE left Foo-chow on the 5th of December, 1876, and our journey to Amoy, which was accomplished in one of Douglas Lapraik and Co.'s comfortable steamers, occupied about nineteen hours. I was much struck with the beauty of Amoy; the Europeans reside on a small island called Kulang-soo, and many of the bungalows command charming views of the bay, and are surrounded by well laid-out gardens, full of rare plants and exquisite flowers. After spending a pleasant ten days in Amoy, we said good-bye to our kind host and hostess, and left in the Chinese Government cruiser, *Ling-fêng*, for Takow. Unfortunately the winter gales in the

Formosan channel, which we were about to cross, are often very severe, and the *Ling-fêng*, though the pink of neatness and comfort, is not a very large or powerful steamer, so we were not much surprised, when we got as far as the mouth of the Amoy harbour, to find that the wind and sea were too formidable for our little craft, and that we were obliged to anchor for the night under the shelter of a friendly island. Next morning the wind showed no signs of abating, and as there was no prospect of our being able to put to sea for another twenty-four hours, we steamed back to Amoy, and in the early morning greeted once more the friends to whom we had bidden adieu the day before. We went on board again, however, the same night, and when we awoke next morning we knew by the motion of the vessel that we were bravely battling with the foaming waters of the Formosan channel. Towards evening, after a rather rough passage, we arrived at Fisher Island, one of the Pescadores group, and anchored for the night.

At daybreak we were up and dressed ready for

a run on the island. Our good captain, knowing we had mapped out for ourselves a good two hours' walk, and that the vessel had to make the difficult entrance to the Takow harbour—sixty or seventy miles away—before dark that same evening, hurried our movements as urgently as his extreme politeness would allow him, and we were soon seated in the captain's gig and on our way to the shore. We landed, as the first rays of the sun were beginning to make themselves felt, in front of a village, the inhabitants of which flocked out *en masse* to behold the rare sight of a "foreign" lady on their beach.

The path which leads up to the lighthouse is steep and rough, and taxed our strength and shoe-leather severely. The hill consists almost entirely of coralline rocks, the sharp edges of which were by no means pleasant to walk upon; but by carefully picking our steps we mounted higher and higher, until, on looking back, our little steamer appeared like a pretty toy almost immediately beneath us. An hour's hard climbing brought us to the light-

house, which is a new building on the top of the barren hill, with no human habitation nearer than the village at which we landed. The keeper who came out to meet us had a most melancholy appearance ; and no wonder, poor fellow ! for what occupation could be more doleful for a European than that of a lighthouse-keeper on a barren Chinese island ?

After examining the lighting apparatus, and signing our names in the visitors'-book, we commenced our descent, and at eight o'clock we were back on board the steamer. Hardly had we arrived when the order was given to heave the anchor, and in a few minutes we were under way again. We were now in comparatively sheltered waters, and the steamer ploughed her way through those sunny Eastern seas without any disagreeable movement. Early in the afternoon we began to look out for Formosa, which in the winter months it is difficult to see from a distance, on account of the dense clouds at that season completely obscuring the high mountains of the interior. At

last a single tree, growing on the top of an old ruined Dutch fort, told our wary captain that we were off Anping, and we immediately turned our course towards the south, and in three hours afterwards we were rolling about outside the Takow bar under the shadow of Ape's Hill waiting for the pilot. In another half-hour we were on shore surrounded by the tropical vegetation of South Formosa.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOUTH FORMOSA — Liang-Kiao — Friendly natives—Night-drill—
The South Cape—Savages.

It was a lovely December morning when we started in the *Ling-fêng* from Takow on a cruise to the most southerly point in the island of Formosa, known as the South Cape.

Christmas was near at hand, but instead of the cold and snow which usher in the festive season at home, we had now a soft balmy atmosphere around us, and a bright but not too hot sun above us. Crossing the bar by the south channel we touched twice, each time causing a slight but disagreeable shock to our unaccustomed nerves. The bottom, however, consists of soft sand only,

and we went on our way towards the sunny south as if nothing had happened. We soon passed Lambay Island, looking gloomy and uninviting in the midst of the bright waters, and then, coasting along the Formosan shores, we proceeded under the shadow of the lofty mountains which here rise abruptly from the sea. About noon we anchored in the Liang-Kiao bay, where the Japanese troops disembarked in 1874 for the purpose of inflicting punishment upon some of the neighbouring aborigines, a proceeding which almost caused a rupture with the Chinese, the real lords of the soil. Since then the Chinese Government has taken active steps to make the law respected in South Formosa, and a district city has now been established some four or five miles inland from Liang-Kiao. It was partly to visit the magistrate of the new city on official business that my husband and a colleague had come to the place, and accordingly they soon left us and we watched them in the cutter bounding over the waves until they reached the land. The view from the deck

of the steamer was truly lovely, the country before our eyes was plentifully covered with tropical plants and trees, the white crests of the waves shone like silver in the sunshine, and the background consisted of massive mountains, whose uneven tops formed a most effective and picturesque sky-line. One peak, shaped like a cone, is most remarkable, and must be an excellent landmark for vessels approaching Liang-Kiao. At four o'clock in the afternoon I went on shore with Captain C—— in the hopes of soon meeting the party who had left us three hours before. Owing to the heavy surf, which did not look so formidable from the vessel's deck two miles away, we had some difficulty in landing without getting wet ; but, owing to the dexterity of the gallant captain, we managed to avoid the breakers, and landed on the sandy beach without any mishap.

As there were as yet no signs of the others we strolled along the shore, picking up curious stones, until we met some natives, who could hardly contain themselves when they beheld such a curious object

as a foreign lady, probably the first who had ever visited the district. With uniform and gold lace they were apparently familiar, but the mysteries of Western female garniture were evidently *caviare* to the good people of Liang-Kiao.

The crowd at first kept at a respectable distance, but the curiosity of their sex inspired two women with the courage to approach, and then I had to undergo the ordeal of a friendly, but almost too rigid, examination. First of all I was flattered to find by signs which they made that they considered me a woman and a sister, then I was obliged to show my feet in order to prove that I was not deformed in that quarter, as all Chinese ladies are, and my hands, hair, and dress, next underwent a minute examination. Meantime the male portion of the crowd, instigated by the courageous example of the two females, began to bestow their attentions upon my companion. As well as gestures permitted them they plied him with questions as to himself, his vessel, where he came from, and where he was going to, and at last, to show how satisfied they were with all the information they


gleaned from him—which I fear was neither full nor very authentic—they offered him their old pipes to smoke, a compliment which with a shudder he declined. They then asked us by signs to follow them and partake of some refreshment, and on our begging to be excused they left us, evidently much pleased with the interview.

The evening was by this time far advanced, and the absentees as yet showed no signs of returning. I began to be a little alarmed, for the country through which my husband and his companions had to pass was a sort of border-land between the “savage” and Chinese territories, in which every man considers it necessary for his safety to go about with a weapon of some sort, and the approaching darkness began to bring all kinds of imaginary terrors to my mind; my courage seemed to fade with the twilight, and an occasional shot heard in the distance did not tend to allay my alarm. The interval between bright daylight and the darkness of night in those latitudes is of brief duration, and in a short time we could scarcely see the boats that lay quite close to us, and a faint

light burning far out to seaward was the only guide we had to the whereabouts of the steamer. Suddenly the hills were lighted up with a bright flame, which began to spread with wonderful rapidity until the entire mountain-side presented one magnificent blaze of light. I was thunderstruck with astonishment at this formidable but really splendid sight which, Captain C—— informed me, was only caused by the burning of a highly-combustible brushwood which the natives set fire to periodically, either to destroy the cover where savages might conceal themselves, or to leave an open space for their cattle to graze upon. Presently we heard shouting in the distance, and our boatmen began to respond and to display lights, and in a few minutes, to my great joy, the wanderers returned, wearied and footsore—for they had walked all the way—but safe and sound. We lost no time in getting into the boats, and as we proceeded towards the vessel, a bright lime-light was burned on board, which turned the gloomy darkness of night into the brightness of day. We were all glad to get on board again, and during dinner the travellers

had much to tell us of what they saw at the new mountain city, and on the road.

After dinner, as the gentlemen were enjoying their cigars on deck, I was mysteriously invited to go on the bridge, and no sooner had I found myself in that elevated position than the order was given "to prepare for action," and in a few seconds the whole ship was in motion, armed officers and sailors ran quickly to and fro, the big guns were got into position, and before I had time to realise what all the commotion was about, my ears were deafened by the booming of the cannon. It was only a night-drill, but I was much relieved when all the noise and turmoil were over. I thought a peaceful night was now before us; but no, before the sailors could have settled down in their hammocks, a stentorian voice cried out "Fire on the quarterdeck!" and the bell was tolled vigorously; up rushed the men once more, each one to his allotted place, and the task of extinguishing an imaginary fire was gone through with regularity and precision. At last



all was quiet; the captain assured us that for that night at least there would be no more enemies to fight, and no more fires to extinguish, on the quarterdeck or elsewhere, so we said good-night, and retired to rest.

Next morning at daylight we started for the South Cape. As we kept pretty close to the shore we had an opportunity of observing the Oriental scenery which characterises the south of the island. One spot on the coast which was pointed out to us has sad associations connected with it. There the American barque *Rover* was driven ashore some ten or twelve years before, and the captain, his wife, and the crew were murdered in cold blood by the ruthless savages who live in the adjoining hills. The sight of the place made me shudder when I thought of the cruel massacre. Things have changed much for the better since that tragedy was enacted; the savages have been more than once made to feel that murder cannot be committed with impunity, and Europeans can now trust their lives with

comparative safety amongst the aborigines of South Formosa. So long ago as 1870 my husband and two others penetrated the savage territory in this very neighbourhood, and were treated kindly by the very tribe that perpetrated the *Rover* outrage a short time previously.* The establishment of the new city, with a magistrate having direct jurisdiction over them, and having a Chinese garrison at his back, has tended to subdue still further those wild mountaineers, and a wholesome respect for Chinese law is now making itself felt in places where a few years ago the most potent mandarin in the empire dared not show himself. About eleven o'clock we anchored quite close to the shore, in a small bay under the shelter of the promontory which forms the South Cape.

The hills, covered down to the water's edge with dense forests, rose abruptly from the sea, except at one point where a small crescent of sandy beach, looking dazzlingly white under the bright sunshine,

* An account of this trip is given in No. 3, Vol. xvi. of the "Transactions of the Royal Geographical Society."

and by contrast with the dark foliage in the immediate background, indicated what appeared to be the only feasible landing-place. To this point our attention was now directed, but for some little time no sign of life was visible, a universal stillness seemed to pervade the entire scene, not a leaf appeared to stir, and the whole place looked as deserted as if it had never before been visited by human beings. After the lapse of a few minutes, however, a sudden change took place; first a quivering movement was noticed amongst the bushes immediately behind the white beach, then a number of armed semi-nude savages sprang from the jungle into the open as if by word of command, and squatting themselves on their haunches ranged themselves in a semicircle on the beach. These were the leading members of the neighbouring tribes, who had been apprised of our coming, and had been waiting in the shade of the forest for our arrival. My husband and three others went at once towards the shore, accompanied by another boat containing an armed escort, which our cautious captain thought it prudent to

send with the party. But the escort remained a short distance from the shore and were not landed, lest the savages should feel hurt at such a precaution, and in a short time we noticed the small handful of Europeans surrounded by a band of as ill-favoured individuals as can well be imagined. A piece of ground had been bought some time before in the neighbourhood for a public purpose, and it was thought advisable to show an interest in the purchase by inspecting the place and the small tenements which had been erected there. We observed the crowd moving for some time along the beach and then disappearing in the woods, and everything seemed so quiet, and the beach looked so lovely that I asked to go on shore; but, as my curiosity was about to be gratified, a sudden shower of tropical rain fell, which quickly scattered all my hopes of a run on the beach. In a little more than half-an-hour I was delighted to see the motley group return, and when our little party came on board, drenched with rain, they brought with them numbers of most lovely

shells and pieces of coral picked up in their hurried scamper on shore. Our brief visit to the South Cape being now over, we weighed anchor, and turned once more in the direction of Takow, at which place we landed in safety the same evening.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Spanish Mission in Formosa—The Care of Foundlings—Rats as
an Article of Diet.

ABOUT two miles from Takow is a Spanish missionary establishment, consisting of a church, a school for native boys, and the residence of the Padre ; it is situated a short distance from the east bank of the lagoon, up a narrow creek, in the township called in the local dialect Tsan-Kin, and though the situation is rather low, the buildings with their clean white walls, as seen from Takow, present rather a picturesque appearance, amid the surrounding paddy fields, bamboo groves, and native homesteads.

The afternoon was a bright sunny one, with a clear sky overhead, when we started by boat on

our first visit to the Padre, whose life would be a very lonely and monotonous one, living as he does with none but Chinese around him, were it not that members of the small European community occasionally call upon him, and invite him to their houses. The pull down the lagoon was exceedingly pleasant, but when we turned into the creek which leads to the Padre's residence the intricacies of the navigation were such that nearly all our attention had to be devoted to the steering of our boat through the numerous oyster-beds and sand-banks which abound in the neighbourhood. Our difficulties were enhanced by the low state of the tide and the large size of our boat; but after a considerable amount of bumping and grating we at last got into deeper water, with mangrove swamps like miniature forests on either side of us; and in a little time we were landed and picking our steps along the muddy path which was the most direct route to the church. The Padre, a strong, healthy, and very handsome man of forty or thereabouts, was dressed in complete Chinese

costume and sported as luxuriant a pigtail as the most exacting son of Han could desire. He received us very kindly in his clean though sparsely furnished apartment, and was evidently pleased to have an opportunity of chatting with Europeans. Conversation was, however, carried on under difficulties, for we could not speak either Spanish or the local Chinese dialect which the Padre had been in the habit of using constantly for sixteen years; he, on the other hand, knew very little English, and less French, but by a judicious mixture of these languages, with a little Latin thrown in, we succeeded in making ourselves tolerably understood; and, although the result was an *olla podrida* which would make a critical philologist stare, it answered all our purpose, and our linguistic blunders were made up for by much enjoyment and good-humour.

We were then shown over the garden, which, with the exception of some splendid white lilies, had but few floral beauties to boast of. The Padre afterwards conducted us over his church, which

was more commodious and complete than we had anticipated; but the flimsy decorations which Spanish taste, and probably a scanty exchequer, were accountable for, were not much to our liking. A partition about four or more feet in height divided the church into two parts—one for the women, the other for the men—and each division had a separate entrance. We next visited the house of a Christian matron adjoining the church, where the Padre told us female neophytes were trained in the groundwork of their religion. The old woman who ruled this establishment was clean and tidy in appearance, and seemed much pleased and flattered by our visit. The principal apartment where we entered had the usual scanty furniture of a Chinese cottage, a common table, a straight-backed chair or two, and a couple of rough benches, which the old lady, with many smiles and curtsies, continued to dust for us with a corner of her dress. On the wall opposite the door, where in ordinary Chinese houses an idol or the ancestral tablets stand, was a cheap

small picture of St. Joseph, with a couple of wax candles in front, and on either side was a black bottle intended either for ornament or to act as extra candlestick on special occasions; one of the bottles looked like an empty sherry bottle, on the other was a label bearing the familiar words, "Bass's Pale Ale."

Before leaving the house I bethought me of the few words in the local dialect at my command to express my admiration of the room and its ornaments, and I uttered the only expression I could think of, "Ching sui"—very pretty. Whether the old woman thought I was alluding to her own somewhat faded charms, or whether she was amused at my attempt to speak her language, I cannot say; but my well-meant compliment was received with a burst of laughter, and the old woman, as she saw us to the door, kept on repeating as well as her laughter would allow her, and as if it were the best joke she had heard for many a day: "Ching sui—ai yah, ching sui." We next visited the boys' school, whose whereabouts we could tell pretty accurately

long before we arrived at the place by the constant buzz of the boys repeating their lessons. The noisy jabbering of the boys ceased as we entered the school, and one little boy about nine years old was chosen to show us how far his teaching had benefited him. A Chinese book was handed to him, and the urchin, putting his intelligent little head on one side, and pointing with his finger to the passage he was asked to read, commenced his lesson with all the rapidity of a mechanical toy after it has been duly wound up; like the toy he soon came to a dead stop, but, on his being asked to read a more familiar paragraph, he rattled away again, as if he had been newly wound up, and continued his rapid pace until the machinery was once more exhausted, and an abrupt pause was the result.

The Padre told us that the care of infant children is sometimes thrust upon him by the Chinese, and that a number of little innocents who would otherwise have perished were then being brought up at the expense of the mission by nurses in various parts

of the country. Many natives, who from poverty or other causes are desirous to get rid of their children, knowing the benevolent nature of the foreign missionaries, expose their newly-born infants in places where the Padre or some members of his household are sure to find them, feeling assured that in his hands they will meet with tender care. When the infants have been for some time in the hands of kind nurses, they are transferred to an orphanage which has been established by the mission in the principal city of the island—Taiwanfoo. When we left the school the Padre invited us once more to his own apartment, where we found the principal table covered with a snow-white cloth, and cups of chocolate were placed for each of us, flanked by tumblers of clear sparkling water, with a plate of nice crisp toast as a substantial addition to the repast. To say the truth, the little excursion had given me an appetite which enabled me to do justice to the Padre's toast and excellent chocolate.

The Padre entertained us with some excellent


anecdotes concerning his flock ; one of these stories was a complete revelation to me, for although I came out to China fully imbued with the notion that the Chinese were in the habit of regaling themselves daily on cats, dogs, and other disgusting things, I had, during my first three years' residence, seen nothing to confirm my early impressions. I had carefully scrutinised provision-shops and the stock-in-trade of itinerant provision-dealers as I passed through crowded Chinese streets, but I had never noticed anything that would arouse more than a transient suspicion. Our servants also invariably showed a great repugnance to animals considered by ourselves unclean, so I had almost made up my mind to consign the cat and rat question to the limbo of exploded theories, when the Padre communicated the following extraordinary fact :

A Chinese Christian came one day in the previous Lent to ask the Padre if his son, who was ill, might be allowed to eat meat.

"Certainly," said the Padre, "if the boy is ill, he can eat meat to make him strong."

"I am very glad," replied the anxious father, "for I have got a nice plump rat for him, and I am sure that it will do my son a world of good!"

Before we left, our kind host made his servants collect a quantity of lilies and other flowers, and laden with our floral spoil we returned to our boat. The tide had in the meantime risen, and on our return we experienced none of the difficulties which beset us on our approach to the Padre's residence. The evening was one of those delightful ones which help to compensate for the loneliness of life in South Formosa. The air was still and balmy, not a ripple disturbed the placid surface of the lagoon; thousands of bright insects flitted over the water, offering only too tempting baits to the fish which swarmed beneath; ever and anon a bright flash of silver, succeeded by a splash, showed the eagerness with which the finny tribe bounded from their native element in pursuit of their prey, and one large fish paid the penalty of his rashness by falling, after his aerial flight, plump into our boat, greatly to the delight of our boatmen, who greeted




the intruder as a not unwelcome addition to the supper they were soon to enjoy.

The sun had just gone down in splendour beneath the sea on the western horizon, leaving behind a host of brilliant hues across the entire expanse of the sky most lovely to behold; and the moist sands on the shores of the lagoon, sparkling with a bright iridescence, helped to strengthen the fancy suggested by the fairy-like scene that we were gliding over some lovely enchanted lake whose waters were of crystal, and whose banks were of the purest brightest pearl.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ape Hill—Gorgeous Insects—Apes on the Rocks—Water Buffaloes.

THE most conspicuous object which strikes a stranger's eye on his approach to Takow is the high conical-shaped mountain which stands on the northern side of the entrance to the harbour. It is called Ape Hill by foreigners on account of the apes which are frequently seen upon it. On a comparatively cool afternoon in September we determined to scale a portion of the mountain, and, taking the path by the shore of the lagoon, we came to the foot of the rough road which leads to the summit. Here our difficulties began, for the path was literally strewn with sharp rough stones which made walking anything but pleasant. Prickly brambles and the objectionable Euphorbia plant had to be thrust




aside as we made our way upward. Occasionally the path became invisible owing to the long grass which grew over it, and which suggested possible snakes underneath; higher up we had to clamber over a huge rough rock which might afford tolerably secure footing for a goat, but displayed many objectionable points to the human climber. After a good hour's scrambling through these and similar difficulties, we arrived, hot, weary, and footsore, on more level ground, where the grass was green and not too long, where the prickly shrubs ceased to torture us, and sharp stones no longer made walking a penance.

In the course of our difficult climbing our labours were agreeably diverted by the sight of a multitude of gorgeous-looking butterflies and other insects, which swarmed amongst the bushes with which the hillside was covered; butterflies of all conceivable colours—pink, black, light yellow, and red-spotted—and large moths with velvety coats of dark green, dark purple, or saffron hues, sported about from bramble to bramble as if vain of their gaudy vesture;

and as they continually perched within easy reach of us, it was difficult to restrain the temptation they afforded for their easy capture. I noticed, too, a large species of spider with a body the colour of gold, keeping watch over a splendid circular web he had spun about a yard in diameter; natives say that this spider is poisonous, and they carefully abstain from coming in contact with it.

In a short time we reached the plateau, an extensive plain covered for the most part with waving grass, which gave the place an appearance of one vast meadow halfway up the mountain. The view from the plateau is magnificent; on the one side the rich plains of South Formosa lay like a beautiful garden stretching out for miles to the south, and eastward towards the lofty range of mountains which skirt the further shores of the island. The pale green of the paddy-fields relieved by the darker hue of the sugar and other crops, the clusters of trees, and the peaceful-looking hamlets surrounded by groves of bamboo, formed a charming picture from our lofty standpoint; and, turning in the



opposite direction, we beheld the glorious sea reflecting what appeared to be myriads of bright stars from its glassy surface, as the waters danced and heaved under the bright rays of the evening sun. The remarkable stillness which pervaded the atmosphere was only broken by the occasional lowing of some wild cattle browsing on a distant part of the plain, and the thrilling notes of a kind of thrush which perched upon a neighbouring rock and cheered us with its song. A deliciously cool breeze fanned our heated temples, and added one more charm to a scene contrasting so widely with what we had been accustomed to see on the plains below. As we were feasting our eyes on all the varied beauties of the scenery, we caught sight of a dark object on a rock close by, which, on closer inspection, turned out to be a large ape about the size of a child twelve years old; it soon discovered us, and no sooner did it do so than it scampered over the rocks with all the agility of its species, and was in a few moments lost to sight. The apes very


rarely show themselves so far down the mountain, their favourite haunts by day being amongst the steep crags at the very summit, where they are sometimes seen by hundreds running along the rocks, far beyond the reach of human interference. In the neighbourhood of our resting-place, however, there were evident traces of the frequent presence of the apes, and well-beaten paths could be traced, leading to holes amongst the rocks which were used, most probably, as homes or hiding-places by the animals. After nightfall the apes are said to come down in great numbers to the plains below the mountain, and farmers complain of the havoc they make amongst the sweet potatoes and other crops.

The lateness of the hour prevented us on that occasion from crossing the plateau, and ascending the higher portions of the mountain, which are in many respects worth exploring. A hollow at the extreme top looks like the crater of an extinct volcano, whilst the numerous shells and marine deposits found on the summit, together with the loose surface-rocks,

composed of a conglomerate of coral and limestone, which are strewn plentifully over the side of the mountain, prove that some violent upheavals and convulsions must at one time have taken place in the locality. In the lower parts of the mountain I have dug out many petrified specimens of marine objects—shells, jelly-fish, etc.—and with plenty of time and patience at one's command one could easily form a large collection of such things.

But we had now no time for investigation or research; the sun was fast setting, and knowing as we did how short the tropical twilight is, and what a long troublesome descent we had before us, we hastened our departure. We had got more than halfway down the mountain when our movements were retarded for a time by a group of formidable-looking water-buffaloes, standing in a little rivulet just at the only point where we could conveniently cross, thus completely blocking our path. These immense animals, though quiet and docile enough with the natives, seem to have a decided objection to Europeans, at whose appearance they gene-

rally become almost paralysed with fear, and in their excitement they are positively dangerous ; in a few instances at Foochow and in Formosa, acquaintances of ours had narrow escapes when pursued by these formidable beasts. On the present occasion, whilst I stood at a safe distance anxiously watching my husband, whose efforts to drive the brutes away appeared only to infuriate them, I was delighted to see the approach of a tiny native boy, whose shrill screaming at once had an effect upon the buffaloes which the most energetic waving of an umbrella had failed to produce ; and in a moment the gigantic quadrupeds, obeying their juvenile keeper, rushed away, and left us free to continue our journey in peace. As we proceeded down the hill, we noticed what a change had come over the scene with the approach of nightfall ; the lovely butterflies no longer flitted about, the golden spider had disappeared, the harsh note of the scissor-grinder now grated on our ears, and from below the hoarse croaking of frogs greeted us in a loud dissonant chorus. One beautiful creeper,



a species of convolvulus, had undergone a complete metamorphosis ; its flowers, which were distinctly white in the bright sunshine, were now as unmistakably pink, and on being plucked they shrunk away and seemed to lose all shape and life and colour. Darkness was just setting in as we overcame the last of our difficulties, and stood once more on level ground at the foot of Ape Hill.


CHAPTER XX.

South-west Monsoon ; dangers of the Takow bar ; a wreck, and
a gallant rescue.

IN the summer months, from May to September, a strong steady south-west wind blows all over the southern parts of Asia, and its influence is particularly felt along the south-west coast of Formosa, on which, during those five months, the long rollers, driven almost without interruption from the Straits of Malacca up through the Chinese Sea, break with a loud and constant roar. It is wonderful to watch at Takow the mighty billows come tumbling in, one after the other, upon the sandy beach to the south of Saracen Head, or dashing against the huge rocks and breaking into feathery spray ; but the unceasing noise is monotonous in the extreme, the loneliness of the place rendering the monotony all the more


painful. For weeks I have listened to the same dull sound, night and day, and I cannot imagine anything more sad or more depressing. It frequently happened that, owing to a more severe blow than usual farther south, the sea rises suddenly and without warning ; even the weather-wise fishermen of the place, who generally know so well when it is prudent to venture any distance from the land in their safe but tiny catamarans, are occasionally caught outside an unexpected and tremendous surf which they are obliged to pass through, on their return, at their peril. On one occasion two fishermen, a father and son, went out in the early morning to fish ; the sky being clear, the sea calm, and the monsoon season being almost over, they ventured out a considerable distance from the shore perfectly sure that no danger threatened them. But a sudden swell having set in from the south they hastened homeward, and found to their horror on their return that the sea was breaking in gigantic crested billows on the bar. There was no room for hesitation, however ; the sea was momentarily getting worse, its fury might last

for days; and the catamaran—which is only a tiny bamboo raft—even if it could live outside, had no accommodation for food or sleep. Waiting for what appeared to be a slight lull in the breaking of the waves, the father and son pushed quickly and bravely on; another minute and they would be once more safe in comparatively smooth water. But it was not to be; a tremendous wave, coming behind them like a huge mountain, caught up the little raft, and flung it like a feather, men and all, high into the air; the lashings of the bamboo snapped with the violence of the blow, and father and son, with the remnants of their catamaran, were precipitated amongst the seething billows. Fortunately both men managed to get hold of the same bamboo, to which they clung with all the tenacity of men struggling for dear life, and, as a strong ebb tide was running out of the harbour at the time, they were carried—almost miraculously, as it seemed to the lookers-on—out beyond the breakers once more. The feelings of those who watched the accident, and who were unable to afford any aid,



can hardly be imagined ; rewards were offered by the Europeans 'present to any catamaran men who would venture out to the rescue of the poor fishermen, but none could be found who would risk their lives in such an attempt. Chinamen are said to shrink from the task of saving human life, even when no risk to themselves presents itself, but in this case it did almost seem as if it would be a throwing away of more lives if any dared to venture to the rescue of the floating men. Presently, and whilst the lookers-on were wondering what was to be done, a catamaran, pulled by four strong young fishermen from the opposite shore of the lagoon, was seen shooting through the mouth of the harbour straight out towards the deadly breakers. Can we believe our eyes, that these are four *Chinamen*—all poor men, with wives and children to think of, no doubt—going forth like heroes, as they were, in the face of possible, nay probable, destruction to rescue the lives of two others as poor and as humble as themselves? All honour to the brave chivalrous fellows! No hope of

reward had they beyond the conviction that they were doing a noble duty, and, without looking to the right or the left, the four Chinamen drove their little craft nearer and nearer to the breakers, but not to the place where the unfortunate father and son, ignorant of the real force of the waves at the place, had tried to cross. Farther north the billows seemed to break with less regularity, and there the brave fellows waited for what seemed a good opportunity, and then with a will they rushed towards the bar; but, before they had got too far for retreat, they saw an immense wave commence to rear its awful front a short distance ahead of them, and with wonderful dexterity the catamaran was driven quickly backwards just in time to escape the breakers, which would probably have dashed the little craft to pieces. Will they succeed in crossing to the rescue? was the query which sprung to the lips of every looker-on. Again they waited patiently for their opportunity, and again they dashed towards the bar, this time with success, and then with all their might they pulled



quickly towards the spot where the two men were clinging to the floating bamboo. To the great joy of everyone the two castaways were safely picked up, and their brave rescuers, adopting the same cautious tactics as before, carried their catamaran safely once more again through the breakers, and had the satisfaction of delivering up to their relations the father and son, who were so heroically rescued from a watery grave.

The four brave men were sent for on the following day by my husband, and offered a reward, which they politely declined, saying that they had only done their duty, and that the rescued men were their own relatives, or belonged to the same clan as themselves; but, at their suggestion, the sum intended for them was devoted to the purchase of a new catamaran, to replace the one lost by the two poor fishermen.

CHAPTER XXI.

Formosan Chinese—Difficulties with servants—A *ci-devant* executioner in our kitchen—The aborigines—Story of a little albino girl.

THE Chinese settlers in Formosa are a sturdy independent race, rough in manner, but cordial and, as a rule, good-natured to strangers. In some places in the interior of the island their independence of character at times gives a good deal of trouble to their rulers, but Europeans have rarely, if ever, had to complain of the ill-feeling of the Formosan Chinese. In such an isolated place as Takow it is sometimes very difficult to get a well-trained servant, and soon after my arrival there I was obliged to be satisfied with a rough native of the place as a temporary house-coolie. He was tall for a Chinaman, straight, strong, and toler-

ably clean-looking, but rough and uncouth to a degree, a thorough child of Nature. The poor fellow did his best to please, but I was delighted when I found at last a competent man who spoke English, to do the work of coolie. The superseded Formosan, when first told that another coolie was coming, received the news with a frown and in silence; but some days afterwards, when I was seated in my room writing, I heard a noise behind me, and, turning round in some alarm, I saw the Formosan moving about in an infuriated manner, gesticulating, and speaking rapidly in his own language words which of course I could not understand; so far as I could unravel the meaning of his gestures he seemed to be imitating the action of tearing out his heart, throwing it on the ground, and trampling upon it. Following my first impression, I asked him in English, "Are you ill?" but, parrot-like, he simply repeated, "Are you ill?" the meaning of which he evidently did not know, and went on with his gesticulations. Becoming more and more alarmed at such extraordinary pro-


ceedings, I got up and rang for the house-boy, and when that individual appeared I demanded the meaning of the coolie's strange behaviour; after hearing the coolie's explanation, the boy told me the Formosan was almost distracted at the thoughts of losing his situation. "I have always worked hard," the poor fellow said; "I have always done what I was told to do; from early morning until late at night I have always slaved for you, and is this to be the result? am I to be cast away as of no account, to starve?" In answer to this eloquent appeal I explained, through the boy, that the coolie was only taken on as a temporary measure pending the arrival of one who could speak English and who was accustomed to the work; but that if he, the Formosan, understood gardening, I would get him the post of gardener, which was soon to be vacant. The look of discontentment which had hitherto sat upon the Formosan's face vanished when my words were translated to him, and in its place came a look of radiant delight. It was the very thing that suited

him, he said ; he had been brought up as a gardener, and he would be sure to give satisfaction in that capacity, etc. ; so the matter was arranged : and a few days afterwards, on returning from my walk, I was surprised to find a number of beautiful little bouquets of flowers in the drawing-room, and hanging over the entrance was a very pretty fancy basket, constructed of, and filled with, sweetly-scented flowers, which threw a delicious fragrance through the entire apartment. On inquiring who our kind and tasteful benefactor was, I discovered that the flowers and basket were brought by the new gardener as offerings, to show his gratitude for the new appointment we had given him.

Another instance occurs to me which illustrates the peculiar straits to which we were occasionally driven in Formosa for want of suitable servants. Our cook, whom we had brought with us from the mainland, considering it necessary for his dignity to have an assistant, I left the appointment in his own hands, and, feeling quite satisfied with the *chef* himself, I did not trouble myself about his subordinate,

until one day in passing close to the kitchen I noticed a native, hatchet in hand, decapitating a fowl for culinary purposes in a manner which struck me with much astonishment. There seemed to be such a professional air about the fellow, and he appeared to be so pleased with his cruel task, that I at once made inquiries about him, and found, to my horror, that he had formerly been an executioner in Taiwanfoo, and that, growing tired of his former employment, or desiring a change, he thought he would try what service in a European household was like ! I need hardly say that I at once got rid of the executioner, who, disgusted with the summary manner in which he was dismissed, returned to the more congenial duties of his original profession.


In the Chinese settlements along the west coast of Formosa the chance of seeing any of the aborigines from the hills—"Savages," as it is the custom to call them—does not often present itself. Occasionally a batch of these unfortunates, taken in one of their frequent collisions with the authorities, are brought by steamer from the southern or south-western



coast, and landed at Takow; but on these occasions they are kept in such close confinement, and they are hurried through the place so quickly that there is hardly any possibility of seeing them. Pei-po-huans, or savages of the plains, are frequently to be met with; but they are so tractable and mix so much with Chinese, to whom they have become more or less assimilated, that they possess but few points of special interest. In Takow, however, there lives a poor woman who is a very favourable specimen of the pure Formosan breed, tall, straight as an arrow, and powerful as an Amazon. Her short closely-fitting costume, her long dark hair, with red tape intertwined, coiled round her head like a turban, her high cheekbones and dark flashing eyes, and her commanding height and splendid figure, in a country where the women are so small and puny, make her conspicuous wherever she goes. It was said that she had wandered at the age of fourteen too far from the hills where her people lived into a territory whose inhabitants were in a state of constant war with the aborigines, and being taken prisoner,

she was afterwards sold to a Takow fisherman, who made her his wife. Her house, formed of rough stones, and covered with loose thatch, though close to where we lived, was built in such an awkward spot amongst the cliffs overhanging the sea that I was never able to satisfy my curiosity by visiting this remarkable being in her own home, but she used to come frequently to our house, and in return for whatever attempts I made occasionally to relieve her poverty, she would show her gratitude by bringing with her beautiful sea-shells, of which she knew I was making a collection.


Some of the more objectionable phases of native character are exemplified by the history of a poor little Chinese girl with whose career I was in some degree connected, and in whom I took a great interest. Little Su-a, when she first came under my notice, was about eleven—though she did not look more than seven—years old; she was beautifully formed and rather pretty, but, unlike other natives, she was painfully fair. Her hair was of a very pale golden colour, almost



white, and her eyes, which she could never open to their full extent in a bright light, were of a pinkish blue; in fact she was that *rara avis* amongst the dark-haired Chinese, an albino.

Her parents were poor ignorant people who lived near Tamsui, in the north of the island, and when they found that one of their children was born without the dark hair so characteristic of their race, they thought a heavy punishment had been inflicted upon them, no doubt for the misdeeds of some remote ancestor. As the girl grew up and her light hair and pink eyes attracted more and more attention, her parents shrank from her as "a foreign devil," and an unnatural monster. They did not care to murder her by direct means, but they wished her to die, and they began to adopt towards her a species of slow persecution which they hoped would lead to her early death. It were painful to dwell on the cruel treatment which I was credibly informed the poor child was obliged to undergo at the hands of her unnatural parents; but, fortunately for her, a poor old Portuguese who

was employed by an English firm in the neighbourhood, happened to hear of her wrongs, and in order to save the little girl's life he offered to purchase her for ten dollars, and the parents, glad to be rid of what they looked upon as an uncanny thing, cheerfully accepted the offer. Little Su-a now entered upon what promised to be a comparatively happy life. She was better clothed and fed than before, and her adopted father treated her as tenderly as if she had been his own child; but just as she was beginning to realise the comforts of her new surroundings the poor old Portuguese fell ill and died, bequeathing, on his deathbed, the little albino to the care of the Spanish missionary at Takow, of whom I have already made mention, and leaving the sum of one hundred dollars to meet the expenses of Su-a's bringing up. When the child was sent to the Padre, he was naturally embarrassed with such a *protégée*—the refuge attached to the mission being only intended for deserted children without means—and he finally resolved to place Su-a under the care of some Spanish nuns



who lived in Amoy. Hearing that we were soon about to go to the latter place, the Padre asked me to convey Su-a there, which I gladly consented to do. We had to wait three weeks for a steamer to take us from Takow, during which time the little albino was under my charge. She proved to be a good affectionate little thing, and she was anxious to do all she could to please me and to show her gratitude.

During our very rough and protracted voyage to the mainland, Su-a, although she was very ill, and must have been frightened at the storm we encountered, neither wept nor complained. On our arrival at Amoy, knowing that the time for parting was at hand, she looked grieved and unhappy, and just before she left for the convent she pressed my hand closely in hers, and looking up to me with a most sorrowful expression she uttered in a tremulous voice some words in her native tongue which I could not understand, and big tears began to roll down her fair placid face. At last I said good-bye, and consigned her to the kind protection

of the nuns, who promised to watch over and train the little friendless one.

From inquiries I have since made, I learn that Su-a has exhibited signs of cleverness, that she is making great progress with her early education, and that she promises to be a good, intelligent, and religious girl.

CHAPTER XXII.

Formosa a beautiful island—Its loneliness—I am taken for a
“Savage”—Snakes—Earthquakes—Beautiful sunrises and
sunsets—My happiest hour.


FORMOSA, as its name indicates, is indeed an island of exceeding beauty, and its charming scenery is only equalled by the extreme fertility of its soil. But when so much has been said the catalogue of its merits becomes exhausted, for in other respects it is difficult to imagine a more dreary, a more melancholy, or a more unhealthy spot for a European, especially a European lady, to be compelled to live in. During the eleven months we spent in Takow I was the only lady resident, and I shall never forget the joy I experienced when a lady from another port came to me for a short visit. After I had been two

months in the island without seeing even a strange European of my own sex, I was one day seated on the verandah watching a small German schooner which had just arrived, and was lying opposite to our house, when suddenly I noticed a female, probably the captain's wife, coming on shore, and the sight almost made me weep with joy; my first impulse was to rush off and embrace the woman, and, although the comely *frau* never knew it, she was the object of my most sincere regard and friendly admiration during her brief stay at our little port. So unusual is the sight of a European female, that on one occasion my head-dress created a sensation far different from any contemplated by my milliner; I was amusing myself in a garden in which I took particular pride, as it had been laid out, after many difficulties, under my immediate superintendence, when, as I approached a corner, separated by a low hedge from a well much frequented by the villagers, I heard a scream, and looking up saw that a stalwart young Chinaman had thrown down his water-buckets in

alarm, and was gazing at me with open mouth, apparently transfixed with astonishment. Terror was depicted in every feature of the man's countenance; his limbs trembled, and before I could realise what the matter was he turned sharply round, and, crying aloud in the utmost fear and horror, fled at the top of his speed towards the village, leaving his buckets behind him. One of our servants who spoke English happening to be near me, I asked him if he could account for the man's strange behaviour, and to my astonishment I learned that the frightened native, who had never seen a European lady before, observing some feathers in my hat, thought I was one of the "savages" from the hills—of whom many Chinese are in constant dread—and fled before there was any possibility of his being eaten or flayed alive.

Besides the absence of civilised society, which is perhaps the greatest drawback to the place, there is a want of good roads which prevents anything like regular exercise; as a visitor once observed, there is only one attempt at a road in

Takow, and that leads to the little cemetery ; so that a quiet walk along the shores of the lagoon was not always conducive to the raising of one's spirits. Then again you feel yourself at times strangely cut off from all communication with the outer world ; for weeks we have been anxiously on the look-out for a steamer, and often, when my husband was engaged in his office, have I wandered alone to the beach near our house, and, turning from the rough dark rocks behind me to the wide waste of waters in front, I have thoroughly realised the feelings of Alexander Selkirk, as expressed in the well-known lines in which he bemoans his solitary state. The long delays which sometimes took place in the arrival of vessels, not only deprived us for the time of our letters and newspapers, but as we depended on the mainland for our supplies of beef, mutton, vegetables, butter, and miscellaneous household stores, and as large quantities of these articles could not be preserved in such a climate, the non-arrival of our provisions was often highly embarrassing. Fowls we always had in abundance,



and a special variety, with black bones and white flesh, we used to consider sweet and tender; but when for days together fowls in some shape or another figure as the principal dish at breakfast, tiffin, and dinner, it is not to be wondered at that a time at last arrives when the weary iteration becomes highly unpleasant, when the tired palate rebels, and a change of some kind is eagerly sought after. For months after I left Formosa no amount of persuasion could induce me to touch a fowl, no matter how nicely served or how artistically prepared.

In alluding to the want of variety in the food procurable at Takow I must, in justice to the place, say a word of praise in favour of the oysters, which are very plentiful, and, though small, are of very good flavour; they are cultivated in the long shallow lagoon, which I have had reason to mention so frequently, and, as if even the shell-fish of this portion of the Chinese dominions were in the plot to develop the rule of contraries which applies to most Chinese things as opposed to European, the Takow

oysters are *not* in season during those months of ours in whose names the letter *r* appears, and they are at their best in the summer, when the home-oyster is never eaten.

Amongst the annoyances of life in Formosa may be reckoned the prevalence of snakes and centipedes : to guard against the approach of the latter during one's sleeping moments it is usual to place the feet of bedsteads in pans of lime, a precaution which effectually prevents the insects from crawling up the bedposts. Some of the snakes are very large, and as doors and windows are constantly open on account of the heat, snakes are occasionally attracted by the lights, and intrude their unwelcome presence in the house after dark. A missionary once told me that, on retiring for the night on one occasion, he found an immense snake quietly coiled beneath the bedclothes, and a fellow-worker of his was wakened one night to find one of these enormous reptiles crawling over the top of his mosquito-net, hissing and darting its fangs through the network. The missionary called loudly for

his servants, who came armed with hatchets and other implements, and with some difficulty despatched the ugly visitor. In our own house we were not free from these pests, and one evening, about ten o'clock, my husband killed in my bedroom a snake which measured five feet four inches in length.

Formosa, like the islands of the neighbouring Philippine group, is occasionally visited by earthquakes which have, in years gone by, on more than one occasion, been attended with disastrous consequences. The last very violent earthquake occurred many years ago, before Europeans came to reside in the island; and then incalculable damage was done to buildings, the wall of the principal city fell to the ground, and many human lives were lost. During our residence three distinct shocks were felt; during the first we happened to be on the water, and we did not experience any sensation then; but on the 28th of June, 1877, about three o'clock in the afternoon, we felt the unmistakable

trembling of the earth, which, when once experienced, can never be forgotten; at first the tremor was slight, but it gradually increased in intensity until our entire house shook, and our native servants ran into the open air with cries of "*Wah! Wah!*" The shock lasted several seconds. On the 23rd July, at one o'clock in the morning, a sharper shock, though of shorter duration, occurred. The whole earth shook violently, the roof of our house creaked as though it were about to fall upon us, and a roaring noise was heard which startled us very much. The violence of the shock, occurring as it did in the dead of night, and wakening us from sleep, inspired us and all the other residents with terror, and by a sudden impulse everybody rushed into the open air panic-stricken. The sensation resembled what would be experienced by anyone standing on an iron tunnel whilst an express train dashed through it.

In looking back upon the days I spent in Formosa, I try to drive from my mind as much as possible the

disagreeable aspects of our existence there, and to dwell rather on the few pleasant features connected with that period of my life—to gloss over the dark, and dwell only on the bright side of the picture. I often think of our pleasant little evening excursions on the peaceful waters of the lagoon, or up one of the winding creeks which flow through the fertile plains of the neighbourhood ; of the bamboo groves, and wilder thickets where the banyan spreads its gigantic branches far and wide, forming in the earth new stems for its support in its onward progress ; of the bright skies and the gorgeous appearances which mark the approach and the decline of day. In truth the sight of a Formosan sunrise in August is one which amply repays the trouble and inconvenience of getting up to look at it. Soon after four o'clock a faint streak of light begins to show itself over the summits of the distant mountains ; imperceptibly the streak grows brighter, until the dark outlines of the hills begin to show themselves distinctly ; then a faint blush spreads gradually over the eastern heavens, followed by a brilliant glow which illu-

minates the entire horizon, whilst the rarity of the atmosphere makes the hills, though thirty miles distant, stand out as distinctly as if they were only half-a-mile away. I have sometimes fancied I could see objects moving about amongst the trees on the mountains, so close did the latter seem. But if the sunrise is splendid, no pen can depict, no language can describe, the extreme beauty of the summer sunset at Takow. Often have I sat gazing spell-bound at the brilliant transformations which accompany and succeed the sinking of the glorious orb of day beneath the sea ; there is hardly a colour, or the shade of a colour, which is not represented in the magnificent scene—pink intermingled with pale blue, red with dark blue, pale green with light yellow, light gray with dark gray, dark yellow with red, then crimson with purple, and finally, when the centre and origin of all this glory disappears, a lovely red suffuses the entire western sky, which gradually, and as it were reluctantly, melts away at the approach of night. Often, too, when the hues of sunset have faded, the bright pale moon comes out to rival with


her serene beauty the glories that have lately passed away. Never have I seen elsewhere such lovely moonlight nights as those I have witnessed in South Formosa during the summer and autumn months. The brightness which pervades the atmosphere almost equals that of day ; I have read with ease by moonlight, and if the heat of the day had not made me languid I should often have carried out my wish to play croquet after dinner ; on such nights everything on sea and on shore is revealed almost as distinctly as if daylight still remained.

It is pleasant to recall those bright scenes and remember that, even in places otherwise unattractive, Nature often generously unfolds her most radiant charms. Candour, however, compels me to say that one particular hour stands forth fresh and bright in my memory as the sweetest and happiest of the many passed in Formosa ; it came to me in the gray dawn of a November morning, when my husband wakened me to say that a mail had just arrived, bringing with it the delightful news that we were to leave the island, and proceed without delay to Shanghai.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Departure from Takow—Voyage in a native steamer—Caught in a heavy gale—Short of provisions—Arrival in Amoy and Foochow—Caught between two fires—Wênchow—Arrival in Shanghai.

AT seven o'clock on a bright warm sunny morning in November, we embarked in the gig which was to take us on board the departing steamer for the mainland, and, although we were in November, the days were yet hot and sultry. With six sturdy natives at the oars we glided swiftly along the smooth waters of the inner harbour, until we passed through the narrow entrance, and proceeded towards the formidable bar which forms a semicircle from the base of Ape Hill on the north to Saracen's Head on the south. Here we found the water no longer smooth; immense billows came rolling towards



the shore ; and as our little boat rose and fell with the surging waves we felt at times as if we were suspended in mid-air, and at other times we seemed to be hopelessly engulfed between mountains of water which threatened every instant to overwhelm us. Our steamer lay two miles from the shore, and I shall never forget the feeling of thankfulness and relief which I experienced when we at last reached the vessel.


The steamer which was to take us to Amoy was a Chinese transport, officered and manned entirely by Chinese. The captain and his officers received us on the quarter-deck, and we were at once shown to a private saloon, with cabins opening off it, which was generally reserved for travelling mandarins, but was courteously placed at our disposal for the voyage.

The accommodation was somewhat rough, and the furniture and fittings were in the Chinese style, but we were thoroughly private, and had plenty of room for ourselves and our belongings. Our course was first directed to the Pescadores, a


group of islands lying to the west of Taiwanfoo, and in a well-sheltered harbour there we anchored for the purpose of coaling. As evening advanced the wind began to freshen, large black clouds commenced to gather ominously overhead, and there was every indication of a coming storm. Our captain and some of his officers had been exchanging visits with the officers of other Chinese men-of-war which happened to be in the harbour at the time, and, although none of them could be said to be tipsy, it was evident that some beverage more potent than tea had passed amongst the nautical acquaintances. The captain showed the change that had come over him principally by dropping the native court dialect in which he had hitherto addressed my husband, and by adopting the less dignified "pidgin English" he had acquired in some former capacity before he became a naval officer. In answer to some remarks about the threatening aspect of the weather, this doughty mariner said: "Oh! my no fear that largey win, my allo some you English man; maskee largey win, no fear,

can walkey allo same ;" so in spite of the threatening storm we left our comfortable anchorage, and in an hour or two, when darkness had set in, we had got clear of Fisher Island, and were in the very thick of a furious north-east gale, blowing as it only can blow in the Formosan Channel. Never shall I forget the horrors of that dreadful night ! The steamer had, it appeared, left her ballast behind in Formosa, and was not at all prepared for bad weather ; so that when we were exposed to the full fury of the storm, we were pitched about in such a manner that the ship almost became unmanageable, and we were in constant danger of being capsized ; at times we heeled over to such an extent that it really seemed as if we could never regain an upright position ; the wind howled frantically through the rigging, the sea broke constantly over the vessel, and came pouring in torrents into the cabins ; and above the din of the storm were heard the unearthly yelling of the Chinese crew, the flapping of sails which had broken away from their fastenings, and the smashing of all kinds of articles

as they were dashed about in the cabins and on the decks. When we considered that the vessel (unprepared as she was for such a storm) and her machinery were entirely in the hands of Chinese, our feelings may be more easily imagined than described. Fortunately the captain managed to turn his steamer round, and it was with sincere thankfulness that I found we were on our way back to Fisher Island, where we at last found rest and a secure anchorage, after the most anxious time I ever passed in my life. Many a time since, when sitting quietly in my room, have my thoughts run back to that dreadful night, and again have I heard those roaring waves, the howling wind, and the fearful cries of the Chinese on board. For three days the gale continued to blow with unabated fury, and, although we were anchored close to the shore, such was the force of the storm that we were unable to communicate with the island. As we had not anticipated that the voyage to Amoy would last more than a day, or two days at the outside, our



private stock of provisions became exhausted, and our kind captain, who had of course only Chinese food on board, was at his wits' ends to provide us with suitable viands. The ship was ransacked on our account, and, after an industrious search, an old Chinaman, a passenger, managed to drag out from the bottom of one of his trunks a box of sardines, which he was probably conveying as a great curiosity and treat to his friends at home, and presented it to us with a kindness and cordiality which, under the circumstances, were highly appreciated. But one box of sardines could not suffice to satisfy for any lengthened period the cravings of two hungry Europeans ; and our friend the captain, continuing to investigate the resources of his ship, discovered another native passenger, who undertook to manufacture a cake "in foreign fashion," if he were only provided with the requisite materials. The possession of this talent on such an occasion at once raised this passenger from the obscurity in which he had hitherto remained to the dignity of a hero, and he was not slow to



take advantage of the eminence to which his genius had suddenly raised him ; he gesticulated to the crowd of admirers who gathered round him, and, in obedience to the orders which he administered right and left, sugar, flour, and eggs quickly made their appearance, and the artist commenced his work with the captain, officers, passengers, and crew forming a critical crowd around him. Anxious to assist in the production of food for the foreign guests, some of the crew busied themselves with providing the necessary implements for cooking, others amused themselves with beating up the eggs, and a good half-dozen struggled [for the honour of mixing the sugar and flour together. At last the volunteer cook pronounced the operation to be complete, and a short time afterwards, to our surprise and delight, a sponge-cake was produced which would have done justice to any culinary artist ; and it would be difficult to say who were most pleased—we, at the prospect of being so pleasantly relieved from the necessity of eating exclusively Chinese “chow-chow ;” or the captain, at being able to

provide us at all events with one kind of food which we could thoroughly enjoy. For the next few days, and until we left the vessel, sponge-cakes were constantly on our table, and the captain and officers had also some manufactured specially for themselves.

On the morning of the fifth day after our departure from Takow, we got once more under way for Amoy, and, although the sea still continued rough, it was very much better than on the first dreadful night we attempted to cross. After nine hours' tossing about, we were delighted to find ourselves once more in smooth water, and as we steamed up the Amoy harbour, the sight of the numerous ships, and of the picturesque foreign bungalows scattered over the island of Kulangsoo, gladdened our hearts, and I was indeed thoroughly grateful and happy when my first (and last) voyage in a Chinese man-of-war was over, and I set my foot once more on *terra firma*.

After a most delightful week in Amoy, where our kind host and his charming wife did every-

thing to make us happy, we left in the steamer *Yesso** for Foochow, where we were to stay a week, and after that time meet the steamer for Shanghai.

Foochow looked as pretty as ever, and it was pleasant to associate once more with old acquaintances, and visit again scenes that were so familiar to us. One evening my husband and I strolled over the hill to have a farewell look at our old house, which stood at the farthest end of the European settlement, and on our return in the dusk by the lower path we were startled by loud cries at a most lonely part of the road where it leads through a grove of fir-trees.

Presently a number of natives rushed madly past us, followed by a band of armed Mandarin runners, who commenced firing at the retreating opium-smugglers—as they turned out to be—and, as the attacked party began to retaliate on the

* The *Yesso* was afterwards very unfortunate; on her return voyage her boiler burst at Hong-kong, killing over 100 persons, and a short time afterwards she was totally lost near Swatow.

officials, we were for a few minutes in the disagreeable position of being between two fires. We heard some of the bullets striking trees near us with a dull thud, and, as we could not be recognised in the darkness, we were for a short period in considerable danger, and lost no time in hurrying to a place of safety. I had often heard of collisions, frequently attended with loss of life, in that neighbourhood between the daring men, who try to convey to Foochow opium landed on the farther side of the island, and the native custom-house officers; but so far as I know we are the only Europeans who have ever encountered any risk in these desperate affrays.

Although we were anxious to get to the end of our journey, we were pleased when we found that the steamer was to call at Wénchow on its way to Shanghai, and thus give us an opportunity we had not anticipated—of visiting one of the newly-opened ports. Our voyage down the river Min from Pagoda anchorage was slow, as our captain had undertaken to tow a tea-laden sailing vessel

out to sea. It was evening when we had cleared all the dangers which lie at the mouth of the Min, and the hawser having been let go, the gallant tea-clipper, with all sails set, turned her head southward, and in a short time was bounding swiftly along with a favourable breeze on her way to old England. Our course lay north, through the labyrinth of islands which are scattered along that part of the Chinese coast, and, after a rough voyage, during which our little steamer tossed about a great deal more than was compatible with my comfort, I was glad when, on the morning of the third day, we glided into smooth water, under the lofty headlands which mark the entrance to Wénchow.

The approach to the city is very picturesque, and from the time the steamer enters the river there is one succession of charming views; neat white cottages, surrounded with lofty trees, are thickly dotted over the fertile plains, which stretch for a short distance from the banks on either side;

and stately hills, from whose dark recesses many a quaint little temple peeps, fill in the background. On nearing Wênchow a number of pagodas are seen, two of them being very remarkable from their resemblance to the funnels of a two-funnelled steamer. The city of Wênchow is celebrated for a quality which is rarely associated with Chinese cities—it is remarkably clean. The streets are wide for China, well paved and well swept, and the houses, as a rule, are built of stone. The city walls are massive, and are covered in a great many places with beautiful ferns. Although the port had been only a few months opened we found the people very polite, and, although the presence of a foreign lady in the midst of their city attracted a large concourse of people, no rudeness of any kind was attempted.

After spending a very pleasant day, visiting the curio-shops and other places of interest, we embarked once more, and next morning we proceeded on our voyage to Shanghai. We arrived at night at the "Model Settlement," and the brilliancy of

the gas-lit streets was like a glimpse of Paradise after our sojourn of eighteen months in the south.

I was truly grateful to be again in a place where nearly all the comforts of civilised life are attainable, and where the charms of European society once more awaited us.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A Trip up the Yang-tze—Chinkiang—Silver and Golden Islands—
A Chinese nunnery—Cruelty of Chinese law—A Mandarin
beheaded—A similar case in Formosa—Parallels in English
history—Wuhu, Kiukiang, Nanking, and Hankow visited.

I HAD often longed for an opportunity to make an excursion up the Yang-tze, and to visit some of the cities which stand on the banks of that majestic river. Such an opportunity presented itself to us in October, 1878, and, having taken our places the night before on board one of the magnificent river-steamers, built on the American model, which ply between Shanghai and Hankow, we left the former place at five o'clock in the morning, and before the breakfast-hour we had crossed the Wusung bar, and were ploughing our way up through the muddy waters of the Yang-tze.

During the entire first day after our departure the rain fell in torrents, and we steamed slowly and wearily against the strong current, still swollen with the floods of the preceding summer. The day was dark and gloomy, and as it was impossible to read in the cabin, and equally impossible to venture out on deck in the pouring rain, the time hung very heavily on our hands. The river in many places overflowed the banks as far as the eye could see, and, were it not for an occasional tree which here and there showed itself, we could easily have imagined ourselves in another Noah's Ark, floating along in the midst of a universal deluge.

At midnight we arrived at Chinkiang, the first stage of our journey, and although we saw but little of it during the first two days after our arrival, owing to the heavy rain which continued to fall, we were charmed with the appearance of the place when the rain ceased, and the sun shone out from a clear cloudless sky. The Bund, on which most of the foreign houses are built, is planted with trees, and forms an agreeable promenade along the

river for about a quarter-of-a-mile. The back streets are well laid out and cared for, and some very good roads, constructed by foreigners, lead for miles across the picturesque country at the back of the settlement, so that on fine days we had ample opportunities for walking and riding through some really pretty scenery, and the numerous interesting places in the neighbourhood afford fresh objects every day to the excursionist.

One of the most picturesque spots on the Yang-tze is Silver Island, which stands in mid-river about three miles below Chinkiang. It is covered with trees, and a number of temples peep through the dark foliage. We were unable, unfortunately, to visit the place, but its pretty appearance always attracted our admiration, whether we viewed it from the deck of a passing steamer or from some elevated position in the neighbourhood.

About two miles from Chinkiang, farther up the river, stands a pretty eminence known as Golden Island, the site of a large monastery. Thirty years ago the island stood in the middle of the river,


and it is said that in 1842 the British Fleet, when on its way to Nanking anchored between Golden Island and the southern bank of the river. Now, however, owing to the great change which has taken place in the course of the Yang-tze at this point, Golden Island stands on the southern bank, gazing placidly down on the waters which have on all sides but one deserted it, and is approached by a pleasant road leading through green fields, and by poor but picturesque Chinese dwellings.

We started about three o'clock one lovely afternoon to visit the place. The sun was shining brightly, and everything around looked gay and cheerful. Occasionally, as we journeyed along towards our destination, we could hear the deep booming of the monastery bell on Golden Island, and the effect was wonderfully solemn as the sweet tones rose and fell on the calm evening air, and were faintly echoed amongst the distant hills. As we neared the creek which flows into the Yang-tze at the foot of the monastery, and in which numbers of small native craft were moored, we heard the

loud wailing of a woman ; and on arriving at the place from which the cries proceeded we saw a pitiful sight—a poor boat-woman kneeling on the deck of a small boat, and weeping over the body of her little dead infant stretched out before her. The tiny marble form looked so white, and oh ! so still, in front of its mother, whose grief was bitter to behold. Passing on from this sorrowful sight, we soon came to the monastery, and, as is usual with such places in China when Europeans visit them, the gates flew open at our approach, and we were cordially welcomed by an old Buddhist priest, who at once constituted himself our *cicerone*, no doubt encouraged with the hope that his labours would on their conclusion be amply rewarded. We had to climb a good number of steps, all formed of massive stones, before we reached the principal hall of the temple, where we saw the usual array of gilded idols, and the ordinary paraphernalia of a Buddhist temple ; but with the exception of a very pretty view of the surrounding country which can be obtained from the top of the hill, and the

massive stone steps already alluded to, there is nothing specially remarkable about the Golden Island monastery. On returning by the place where we had seen the dead child, we saw nothing but a rude coffin, already nailed up, and waiting for burial, and at the same moment the monastery bell sent forth one of its long solemn sounds, which came upon our ears like a funeral knell for the poor little baby that had lately passed away.

One evening in the month of August we were returning from the hills behind the settlement, when we were overtaken by a thunderstorm which burst suddenly above our heads. As it was beautifully clear and bright, without any foreshadowing of the coming storm, when we set out on our little excursion an hour or two before, we were unprovided with wraps or umbrellas, and we were glad to take shelter in the first house we met, which happened to be a nunnery. I had never been in a place of the kind in China before, and for some time I could scarcely believe that



the beings with closely-shaven heads, and long dirty yellow garments, who quickly surrounded us on our arrival amongst them, were of the gentler sex at all : they looked so like diminutive Buddhist priests that I at first took them to be members of that august body. The principal hall of the building in which we were received was dark and gloomy, the two or three flickering oil-lamps serving rather to heighten than diminish the prevailing gloom. One old nun, who was probably the abbess or lady superior of the convent, remained in the farthest and darkest corner of the hall, dreading perhaps to come in too close contact with the unbelieving barbarians who had invaded the sacred precincts ; but the four younger sisters had no such dread of their strange visitors, and were almost too demonstrative in their well-meant attentions. They quickly produced a couple of common little Chinese stools, and, after dusting them with their robes, invited us to sit down ; they then offered us some hot tea, and when they noticed that the close atmosphere of the place made me feel very uncom-

fortable, two of them armed themselves with fans and began vigorously fanning me. Then came the inevitable critical examination of my dress and ornaments, and the comments made by the nuns as each garment or trinket passed under review were highly amusing.

Hearing us speak to each other, one very wise young nun said to the others: "Just listen; they talk much in the same way that we do." "Of course," said the enlightened abbess in the corner, "don't you know they have a language of their own." As it was getting late and the rain had somewhat abated, we got up to retire; but before we left the nuns kindly supplied us with native umbrellas, which we were very glad to have. Just before leaving, my husband thanked our kind entertainers in their own language, and their astonishment was great at finding that their freely-uttered remarks made in our presence must have been understood by at least one of our party.

During my visit to Chinkiang an incident occurred which illustrates the arbitrary and, according to our

ideas, cruel manner in which the law is often administered in China. I was out one afternoon with some friends on the hills behind the settlement, and as we were borne along in our chairs over a path which overlooked the river and the low-lying lands along its banks, one of the party called attention to a fearful-looking object which was to be seen in the valley below—the headless trunk of a mandarin who had just been executed. Fortunately for me (for the sight would have been a fearful shock to my nerves) I did not at once look in the right direction, and before I could look a second time my chair-coolies had carried me out of sight of the place. On our return about an hour afterwards we could see nothing but an ordinary plain coffin lying on the ground near a grave which was being prepared on the very spot where the unfortunate man was beheaded. The particulars of the case, so far as I could learn, were as follow : The man who met with such a fearful fate was an official high in office—a red-buttoned mandarin, I was told—at Nanking. For some time he had been taking advantage of his


position to rob and injure the people, and it was said that on some occasions he had cruelly murdered those who were in any way a bar to his wicked projects. For some time his career of villainy went on unchecked, but eventually private information was forwarded to Peking with ample proof of the man's crimes, and an order was at once issued by the Government for the immediate degradation and execution of the mandarin. The murderer having got a hint of the fate that was about to befall him, made his escape from Nanking and succeeded in reaching Chinkiang, in the neighbourhood of which place he secreted himself in a small house; but a detachment of soldiers tracked him to his hiding-place, dragged him out, and without any further warning stripped him of his robes, and, when he was naked to the waist, made him kneel down, and there and then decapitated him.

Whilst I was in Formosa I was told of a still more cruel case, the sad *dénouement* of which took place in Taiwanfoo. Many years ago in Canton a military mandarin committed some capital offence, the particulars of which I have never heard clearly

explained, and by some means or other—bribery probably—managed to escape punishment. Years elapsed, during which promotion came in due course, and at the time I write of the mandarin held a high position at Anping in Formosa, and lived a happy life quite free from fear of any punishment for his almost-forgotten crime. Some hitch must have occurred, however, in the arrangement he had made for concealment so long ago ; and, having been reported to the central government, Nemesis, in the shape of a peremptory death-warrant from Peking, pursued him to his distant Formosan station. The official, whose duty it was to have the Peking warrant executed, whilst he dared not disobey, felt the difficulty of his position ; the military mandarin was very popular, especially amongst the soldiers he commanded, and any delay or premature disclosure of the Peking sentence might bring about a riot, for which, according to Chinese law, the civil authorities would be held responsible. Accordingly, the mandarin charged with the carrying out of the law, invited a number

of his brother-officials, including the intended victim, to a feast, and when at a late hour the guests got up to take their leave, the military mandarin was prevailed upon, as a special favourite, to remain behind and share another friendly glass with his entertainer. It was almost daybreak when the now inebriated military mandarin was allowed to retire, and, staggering across the courtyard to the place where he had deposited his official robes before the feast began, he was astonished to find himself surrounded and apprehended by his host's retainers, and, without a word of explanation other than that the Emperor's orders were being carried out, the wretched man was hurried off to the execution-ground, where, in the gray dawn of the morning, he was summarily beheaded.

In a country like China where the Government is purely despotic, and where the force of public opinion is as yet unknown, such barbarous acts must be expected to occur from time to time. I have said elsewhere that, so far as the theatre is concerned, China is to-day what England was in the time of



Shakespeare; and if we desire to find the harsh Chinese system of administering justice paralleled in the annals of English history, it will be necessary for us to travel back to the reign of him whose character, Macaulay tells us, "may be best described by saying that he was despotism itself personified." To select one instance out of many, it is said that Henry VIII., having taken a violent dislike against John Becchi, Abbot of Colchester, issued a warrant for his immediate execution; the magistrate to whom the carrying out of this harsh sentence was entrusted, considered that stratagem ought to be employed in order to ensure the swift and sure accomplishment of his odious task. For this purpose he invited the unsuspecting abbot to a feast, and, when the guest arrived, he was seized by the minions of his treacherous host, and hanged without mercy. So far as we are concerned, those wretched times have gone, never more to return, and let us hope that for China too the dawn of a brighter day is approaching, when such cruelties as those recorded will be no longer possible, and

when she shall have flung aside the ancient but effete system to which her rulers still pertinaciously cling—a system which is now as much behind, as it was once in advance of, Western civilisation.

After leaving Chinkiang on the upward voyage, the most remarkable places are Nanking, the southern capital; Wuhu, one of the recently-opened "Treaty Ports;" Kiukiang; and Hankow. We did not land at Nanking, the steamer only stopping long enough to drop Chinese passengers and take others on board; but we could see from the immense straggling city wall, which extended for miles over hill and valley, what a large and important place it was.


Wuhu is a port which as yet exhibits no attractions for Europeans. The few foreigners who reside there are obliged to live in Chinese houses, and dispense with many of the comforts which are plentiful in other ports. To add to the wretched appearance of the place, it rained heavily on the occasion of our landing there, and when the weather cleared up and we sallied forth to see something of

the streets, we floundered along through oceans of mud, so that shopping was by no means the most pleasant of occupations under the circumstances. The people, too, not being as yet much accustomed to the appearance of foreigners in their midst, followed us in large numbers; and although they were not rude in any way, still the close proximity of a Chinese crowd in narrow dirty streets is a thing to be avoided; and after making a few purchases we were not sorry to make our way back to the jetty, where a gig was waiting to take us on board the steamer.

We went on shore at Kiukiang both on our journey up the Yang-tze and on our return. It was evening when we first arrived, and as it was dinner-time, and we had rather less than an hour to stay, we did not care to disturb any of the residents in their houses, but contented ourselves with a stroll along the Bund, or riverside promenade, which is kept in good order, is planted with trees on either side, and is one of the attractions of the place. Owing to a regulation, useful in many respects,

which exists at Kiukiang, prohibiting the use of the Bund as a thoroughfare for Chinese, the place looked thoroughly dismal and deserted, and overhanging trees gave a melancholy aspect to the entire scene. On our return journey from Hankow it was bright daylight, and things looked a little more cheerful; we visited some friends, and under the escort of one of the foreign residents we penetrated the Chinese streets, and came away possessed of some specimens of the chinaware for which the place is celebrated. We regretted not being able to make an excursion into the country at the back of Kiukiang, which is said to be very charming; but from the deck of the steamer we could see the magnificent range of hills, the Lushan, some dozen miles away, and the country lying between seemed picturesque and full of pastoral beauty.

Hankow, about six hundred miles from Shanghai, was the farthest limit of our journey up the Yang-tze. The settlement of Hankow has to boast of the finest Bund in China. The streets were laid out



and the foreign buildings erected at a time when hopes were entertained of a gigantic development of the foreign trade—hopes which have not been fully realised. Many of the houses, partly from disuse and neglect, and partly from the ravages of the inundations to which the place is subject, were, on the occasion of our visit, showing signs of premature decay. Having remained three days in Hankow, we started on our return voyage, and when we at last reached Shanghai, after a three weeks' absence, we looked back with pleasure and satisfaction to our trip on the great river Yang-tze.

CHAPTER XXV.

Pootoo, the Sacred Island—Tiffin in a Buddhist temple—A self-imprisoned monk—Ningpo.


IN the summer of 1879, we made an excursion to Pootoo, an island in the Chusan Archipelago, known as the Sacred Island, inhabited almost entirely by Buddhist priests, and covered with Buddhist monasteries and Buddhist shrines. We left Shanghai about five o'clock in the afternoon; it was rather stormy in the river, but the wind was delightful to us after enduring for several days the close clammy heat nearly always felt in Shanghai during July; the farther we went the more exhilarating the air became, and we felt already stronger and better ere we had gone out to sea. When we had reached Gutzlaff, we ex-

perienced a delicious briny odour, and the unmistakable glorious sea-breeze, blowing, as it were, all care away. We passed many islands and pretty bits of scenery; but I was much disappointed to find that the water was as muddy as though we were still in the Whang-poo, so far does the colouring matter extend beyond the mouth of the great Yang-tze, whose waters are so thick and yellow with mud. About eleven at night the moon rose full and beautiful, its bright rays revealing the outlines of all the numerous islands which we should otherwise have missed seeing altogether. About half-past five the next morning we arrived at Ningpo, and, leaving again in about an hour's time, we reached Pootoo about midday.

Our passage from the steamer to the shore was far from being pleasant; our boat was not a very large one, and in it were crowded nine passengers besides the captain and the Chinese crew. The sea was rather rough, and when we approached the shore, and got into such shallow water that the boat could not rise with the waves, the sea broke

over our tiny craft, and not only drenched our clothes, but left a quantity of water in the bottom of the boat, in which our feet were well soaked before we reached the shore. Our difficulties in landing were not over until we had clambered across a number of slippery rocks, but we at last found ourselves on a tolerably good path which leads up from the shore to the more elevated parts of the island.

Following this road we walked along, hoping that the exercise would keep us from catching cold in our wet clothes, whilst the sun's warm rays would dry the dripping garments. But I found walking with such a weight clinging about one's person rather difficult, and when we had reached the top of the first hill, where a pavilion is erected, I was glad to take advantage of the privacy it afforded to divest myself of some of my damp habiliments, and, wrapping myself in a cloak I had brought with me, and which fortunately had not got very much wet in the boat, I seated myself in the sedan-chair which was prepared for me, and so continued my journey through the island.



The scenery as we proceeded was very grand ; we passed through long narrow lanes overcanopied with trees, and from the mossy banks on either side of the path peeped out pretty wild flowers, graceful ferns, and tiny shrubs, whose leaves, tipped with brown and scarlet, contrasted beautifully with the green leaves of the ferns. "Oh Nature," thought I, "how artistically, and with what exquisite taste, all your works are executed!" Some of the trees we passed were of immense size, the trunk of one in particular was at least twenty feet in circumference. After a very pleasant journey we reached the temple, where the servants from the steamer had already commenced to prepare tiffin for us ; the temple was situated on the very brink of a precipitous cliff overlooking the sea, and commanding splendid views of the adjacent islands ; it had no pretensions to architectural beauty, but was a plain solid structure, built on and against the sides of the solid rock, and, on a closer inspection, we found that some of the inner rooms had the appearance of having been cut into

the rock itself. Several of the small rough Chinese tables belonging to the monastery were joined together so as to form one long table, now covered with a snowy white cloth, on which the servants were placing all sorts of tempting dainties. It was a curious sight, in that out-of-the-way corner of the world, to see in a dingy little Buddhist chapel a well-laid out table, covered with many of the delicacies which Europeans appreciate, and surrounded by a group of Western strangers, as much at their ease as if they were seated at a luncheon-table in London, the old Buddhist priests whose sanctuary had been invaded smiling blandly on, and the tawdry gilded idol looking down benignly on the scene, as if it was some new ceremony designed for his special honour.

One of the priests was evidently of opinion that the sight of so many unbelievers devouring viands, some of which were prohibited according to the ancient ordinances of Buddha, was not a proper one to meet the eyes of their idol; for, no sooner had we commenced our meal, than the holy man

hung up a piece of red cloth, in the manner of a screen, before the face of the gilded image. The priests must have really believed that their own actions were no longer visible to their deified patron, for, on our presenting them with some champagne, they each sipped a little in turn, passing the forbidden liquid on from hand to hand with many a leer and wink, and with much smacking of lips, as if they appreciated it thoroughly. One very pious old gentleman put down his beads to clasp with both hands a half-emptied bottle that was given him, and with a sly glance up at the red curtain to make sure that the idol was not peeping, he applied the bottle to his holy lips, nor did he remove it until it was quite empty.

The pleasant society, quaint surroundings, and, indeed, the excellence of the tiffin itself, made our meal a most enjoyable one, and our jocular captain, who presided as host, by his wit and humour made the time pass so quickly that, when we broke up our sitting, the sun had lost much of its fierceness, and we were free to roam about the

hills, along the pleasant paths, without danger of sunstroke. In the course of our rambles we visited some of the other monasteries of the island; in one of these we saw a Buddhist priest shut up in a close cell, where he had been, by his own wish, immured for three years. The door leading into the hermit's room was locked with a padlock, and strips of paper covered with Chinese characters were pasted across so that the door could not be opened without the paper being broken. The monk's hair and beard were quite long, and although his face was pale he seemed to enjoy good health, and he looked perfectly happy. Peeping through the hole in the wall through which he communicated with the outer world, we could see the scanty furniture of the little cell: a few boards stretched across two stools and covered with matting represented his bed, on the right was a little table with a broken pitcher and a small earthenware teapot upon it, and on the left was a little altar on which stood a small brazen image. The self-imprisoned monk came from Nanking, and his native dialect was therefore

one somewhat similar to the language learned by foreign officials, so that my husband had no difficulty in carrying on a conversation with him. He told us that his reasons for shutting himself up were that whilst he was in the world his mind was disturbed ; now he enjoyed peace and sweet content, there was nothing to worry him, "to make his heart sad," and his daily wants were supplied without any efforts on his part.

It is not an unusual thing for Buddhist priests to undergo voluntary confinement in this way ; it brings their monastery under notice, and attracts visitors, none of whom leave without depositing an "offering," and when, after three or four years, seclusion, the hermit emerges with long unkempt locks and flowing beard, he is generally sent out on a begging expedition, when his appearance and his reputation as an ascetic are sure to bring in a good supply of "cash"* for the wants of his monastery.

* The small Chinese copper coins are in English called *cash* ; about twenty of them equal one penny.

A little farther on we entered another monastery, inside the door of which, on the left as you entered, was a stone basin containing water ; in the principal hall twenty-six images were ranged, thirteen on each side, and in the centre a chubby-faced benign-looking deity smiled on us as we entered. A dirty-looking young priest was seated in one corner of the building, where he had charge of the little pieces of yellow paper with oracular statements printed on them which are presented to the people who come to discover the will of "Joss" regarding their earthly concerns. One of these curious little documents was drawn for me and another for my husband, and if half the good things they promised us ever come to be fulfilled we shall have no reason to murmur at our future lot. After visiting one or two other temples, we strolled down to a lovely beach, in a secluded corner of which our kind captain had erected a tent for my own special comfort, I being the only lady of the party, and having attired myself in a bathing costume, I indulged in a most refreshing sea-bath. When I

was again dressed it was getting late, and having joined the others, who had been bathing in another part of the beach, we all proceeded towards the landing-place, where a larger boat than the one which brought us on shore in the early part of the day awaited us. The steamer was not far distant from the shore, but as the boat was heavy, and as we had to make our way against a strong wind that had arisen and a head sea, it would have taken us a long time to traverse the distance had not some of the passengers lent a hand at the oars, and pulled away with a will that had more strength than skill to recommend it. Indeed it was rather ludicrous to observe the style of the oarsmen, all pulling out of time, as we pitched, tossed, rolled, and plunged all the way to the ship.

Both in going to and returning from Pootoo we put in to the Treaty Port of Ningpo. The entrance to the river is very picturesque; on one side rises a steep hill, on the summit of which stands a monastery; a short distance out seaward on a little island may be seen a lighthouse, its

white tower and numerous windows glistening in the bright sunshine; and inside the mouth of the river, opposite the village of Chinhai, we observed a large fleet of junks lying at anchor, some preparing to brave the dangers of the deep, others just arrived from their perilous wanderings over the stormy sea. About two hours' steaming up the winding river brought us to the foreign settlement which is situated on the river-bank outside the Chinese City of Ningpo. On one occasion I availed myself of the few hours' stay which the steamer had to make to go on shore and purchase a few curiosities. The weather was hot, and as I was carried in my sedan-chair through the narrow streets, the inhabitants, with very scanty clothing on, were hanging listlessly about their doors and windows, fanning themselves, and endeavouring to get a breath of cool air. Ningpo does not enjoy a better reputation for cleanliness than the majority of Chinese cities, but on this occasion, whether it was that, in the absence of recent rain, the streets

were unusually dry, or whether it was that I was taken through the most presentable of the thoroughfares, I found the streets well paved and clean. After going some distance we came to one of the city gates, a small low archway, through which we entered, and immediately afterwards found ourselves in a bustling street with shops on either side. At a doorstep as we passed I noticed a sight common enough in China, but one which shocks our Western feelings; a child about a year old lay on its mother's knees, and its little head was held back whilst its mother pinched its tender neck until a number of red marks were left behind. This system of counter-irritation is universally practised in China, and is considered a sovereign remedy for many ailments, and the disfigurement on the neck lasts for several days. I had never before seen a child subjected to this ordeal, and the poor little thing screamed and became purple in the face with the painful treatment it was undergoing. Having purchased some

pretty silk embroidery and some wood carvings for which the place is famous, we returned to the steamer, glad to breathe once more the pure cool air from the river.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Chinese amahs—A tyrannical mother-in-law—Story of young Wang and the highwayman.

IF the possession of a fully-competent maid at home be one of those blessings which are constantly prayed for and rarely obtained, what must be said of the difficulties which are to be met with in the pursuit of a capable Abigail in China? On account of our frequent change of residence, I have had a varied experience in this respect, and it is amusing sometimes to recall the characteristics of the amahs I have known.

During my stay in Shanghai I had an amah who was a Christian, and, having been trained in a missionary school, could speak English very fairly without having to adopt "pidgin English."

In the course of her daily duties she used to entertain me with scraps of "Happy Land," and other hymns which she had learned, and she would vary the entertainment at times by explaining to me some of the domestic customs which obtain amongst the Chinese, as exemplified by her own particular experiences. The amah, who was by no means devoid of good looks, had been married very young, and, before she had arrived at what we should consider a marriageable age, she was left a widow with two children. Chinese custom compels females when they marry to cherish, even more than their own, the parents of the husband, and on the demise of the latter it devolves upon the widow to support, if necessary, her parents-in-law.

My amah was obliged therefore, on the death of her husband, to seek means of subsistence, not only for herself and her children, but for a stern mother-in-law, who looked upon her son's widow as her slave, who could be ignominiously punished without daring to remonstrate, and who was bound

to toil without ceasing for the support of the household.

Chinese old women frequently take advantage of their position to behave most cruelly towards those whom the law places in their power. The amah was not only obliged to hand over to her mother-in-law all her wages, and crave as a boon food for her children and clothing for them and for herself, but if by any accident she happened to displease her stern task-mistress she was sure to be furiously set upon by the latter, beaten with sticks, and to have patches of hair dragged remorselessly from her unfortunate head ; under the circumstances the amah's visits to her children were always made in fear and trembling, and the poor thing's struggles between her desire to see her offspring and her dread of her mother-in-law were sad to witness. She was by far the best specimen of a Chinese servant I had seen, and when we were obliged to leave for a southern port I was anxious for her to continue in my service ; but her mother-in-law, who was always dreading lest the amah should run

away and get married again, and thus cut off the bountiful supplies she was enjoying, would not hear of her departure; an offer of higher wages was without effect, and the only terms on which the old tyrant would part from her slave were the impossible ones that I should purchase her for the sum of three hundred dollars, and then it would not have mattered if the amah had never shown her face to her mother-in-law again.

Amongst the stories illustrative of Chinese manners and customs told by the amah, the following may be taken as a favourable specimen. I was assured that the hero of the tale was a well-known individual, and that the leading incidents could all be vouched for.

In the neighbourhood of Shanghai some years ago lived an old farmer named Wang, who, by his industry and frugality, had, in the course of a somewhat chequered life, managed to accumulate the sum of six hundred dollars; his family in his old age consisted only of two sons, but the satisfaction which he naturally felt in having male

representatives to succeed him was somewhat weakened by the violent antipathy which his elder son constantly displayed towards the younger one. The cause of this animosity was not far to seek, for it was impossible to look upon the comely appearance of the younger son, and contemplate his erect gait and intelligent bearing, without feeling that there was an object at hand for the envy and ill-will of the elder son, who was as repulsive in appearance, and as vindictive in disposition, as his brother was handsome and amiable. The characters of the brothers, too, might have been estimated by the different manner in which they were regarded by their neighbours; for the elder was studiously avoided by grown-up people, and the village children hooted at him when he appeared in public, whilst the younger one was flattered and caressed by all who knew him. In due time old Wang was gathered to his fathers, leaving the entire management of his little property to his firstborn, with the understanding, however, that the younger son was to be as well provided

for as the means at hand would allow. When the ceremonies connected with the interment of old Wang were concluded, the elder brother called the younger one to his presence and thus addressed him: "For years I have hated you; you have been a thorn in my path, an eyesore in my sight; I have longed for a deliverance from you, and the wished-for time has come at last when I can rid myself once for all of your loathsome presence. Listen to me: I have unlimited control over the money our father has left behind him; leave this place at once, swear that you will never again darken my door, and I will give you half of my father's money—three hundred dollars will be yours. But, refuse my offer, remain in this neighbourhood, and not a single cash shall be given to you—no food of mine shall touch your lips; you will be a beggar, and every effort of mine will be directed towards the achievement of your utter ruin."

The amiable brother having thus delivered himself of his feelings, it occurred to the younger

one that separation from such an implacable foe, and the possession of three hundred dollars, were infinitely preferable to living at home in persecution and beggary; so the bargain was at once agreed to, the dollars were counted out, and next morning the youth was ready for his journey. Secure in the possession of his little fortune, the handsome young man bade an eternal farewell to the only place he had ever known—the scene of his early joys, the spot sanctified with the recollections of his parents and his boyhood's years; no tears of regret fell as he separated himself from his scowling ill-favoured brother, but his emotion was great when it was necessary to part from the sympathising friends, who escorted him a considerable distance on his way. His destination was Soochow, which he had often longed to see, ever since the days of his infancy, when his little eyes used to dilate with amazement at the tales which were then told to him of that wonderful city, of its wealth and splendour, its gorgeous temples, its magnificent yamêns, the rare beauty of its women, and

the heroic deeds of its men ; and he now hoped, with the aid of his talents and his money, to win his way in that city of romance to competency, if not to fame. Knowing, however, the absolute need of a fair supply of money at the outset of his career in a strange city, he husbanded his resources during his journey, determined to walk every inch of the road, and to stop only at the most unpretending wayside inns for rest and refreshment.

On the first evening after his departure, as he sat in front of a tea-house refreshing himself with a cup of the national beverage, a poor old man came forward with every sign of fatigue and want upon him, and requested assistance. The young man, whose generosity was as celebrated as his other good qualities, immediately felt touched at the poor man's appearance and condition, and, telling him to take a seat at the table beside him, he called one of the attendants, and forthwith ordered a substantial meal for the mendicant. The latter was most profuse in his gratitude, and

devoutly prayed that the Five Blessings* might descend upon our young adventurer, who, being anxious to avoid notice, picked up his wallet quickly, paid his bill, told the old man to enjoy himself, and proceeded on his journey. Three hours' steady walking brought him to the village where he had decided to spend the night; and, having secured a comfortable bed, he retired at an early hour, and was soon buried in the refreshing sleep which is the invariable result of a moderately exhausted frame, a healthy system, and a clear conscience.

His sound sleep was his salvation; for, as he slumbered, well-armed robbers, who would have had no scruple in killing him had he wakened, were at work in his room, stealthily removing his wallet and his much-prized dollars, and it was well-nigh morning when a friendly touch was laid upon his

* The five blessings are commonly enumerated as follow: longevity, honour, wealth, posterity, and a natural death. Chinamen, however, use the phrase in a general sense to mean *all* blessings.

arm, and a voice that had no unkindness in it whispered into his ear that the slightest sound of alarm would be his ruin, that he was in a den of thieves who were even then planning the readiest and safest means of murdering him, and that his only chance of safety lay in immediate and noiseless flight. "Rely upon me," said the mysterious visitor, "I am one of the gang, but you behaved kindly to me at the tea-house when I was disguised as a beggar, and I never forget a kindness." "But my wallet! my dollars! where are they?" whispered the alarmed young man. "Be at ease on that score," said the robber; "your wallet has been stolen, but your dollars turn out to be worse than useless—*they are only copper silvered over*—and it is on account of their disappointment and vexation at the trick which my mates believe you have played upon them, that they have made up their minds to murder you. Fly then before it is too late, return to your home; here is a little money to help you on your way, and remember that even a robber can be grateful for an act of kind-

ness." The young man thanked his preserver and hurried from the scene of danger, and if he shuddered at the fearful fate which had so nearly befallen him, he was also horrified at the unmanly attempt which his unscrupulous brother had made to put him into the hands of justice, and have him thrown into a felon's prison in a strange place, where, without friends or acquaintances, it would have been next to impossible to prove that the counterfeit coin—the circulation of which in China is a very serious crime—was obtained in ignorance of its real nature.

Little remains to be said, except that the youngest brother presented himself soon after at the home he had thought he would never see again, the elder brother's treachery having released him from the promise he had made never to return; and having accused his brother of his perfidious conduct, and threatened to make the matter public, the guilty man quailed before the prospect of a just retribution, confessed his crimes, threw himself on the mercy of his intended victim, and offered him any portion he chose to accept of the money their

father had left them. The young man, not wishing to publish the iniquity of one who, however guilty, was so closely allied to him, took three hundred dollars, making sure this time that they were real ones, and before any of his friends had heard of his return, or could begin to speculate on the cause, he quietly started once more on his journey, reached Soochow in safety, and after several adventures succeeded in obtaining an honourable position, which he holds to the present day, with much credit to himself, and with the entire good-will and respect of the numerous friends he has acquired in his adopted home.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Story of a jinricksha coolie, cruel treatment by a European sailor—
More about amahs—Intelligence shown by a little pet bird.

I REMEMBER being much touched by my amah's account of the misfortunes which befell a cousin of her own; and as some of the incidents, reflecting on the conduct of the lower class of Europeans towards Chinese tally with much I had frequently seen myself in the streets of Shanghai, I am sorry to say I do not consider the case either an exaggerated or an exceptional one. The amah's cousin was a young man living in a country village some miles distant from Shanghai; he had learned the trade of shoemaking, but being naturally of a delicate temperament, and having a weak chest, the close confinement and constant stooping over his work began to have an injurious effect upon his health,

and he was obliged to give up his trade, and remain at home in his father's house. His friends were very poor, and the young man felt ashamed at being compelled to eat the bread of idleness, and to add to the expense of the little household to whose resources he could himself contribute nothing. His health, too, instead of improving, began to grow gradually worse, and the native doctor, with more sense than would be generally ascribed to members of his profession in China, pronounced the ordinary nostrums to be of no value in the case, and that the only remedy was regular occupation which allowed of exercise in the open air. On the receipt of this decision a family council was held, at which it was decided that the young invalid should be sent to Shanghai provided with a jinricksha—a small hackney carriage drawn by a man—and with this as his stock-in-trade gain health and, it was hoped, fortune in conveying passengers about through the streets of the foreign settlement. For some time the jinricksha man plied his new trade with all the


zeal of a novice, and, although the work was at times fatiguing and very trying to his weak constitution, the general result justified the doctor's prediction, and the lad's frame began to acquire new strength, and his health day by day improved. But if fresh bloom began to return to his cheeks, fresh brightness to his eyes, and fresh development to his muscles, the other half of the hopes entertained by his friends was still far from fulfilment; his fortune had yet to be made, and so far his experience checked, rather than encouraged, his dreams of future prosperity. A long succession of bright, dry, frosty days, such as one frequently sees during the winter months in northern and central China, when walking was much more enjoyable for short distances than sitting in an open vehicle, told against the poor jinricksha man, and the very weather which added to his health and strength operated against him in other respects, and left his pockets empty. One morning, in weather such as this, he was walking leisurely, his jinricksha behind him, along the French Bund;

he was utterly depressed and miserable, for his receipts had latterly been insufficient to meet his modest wants, and, having now expended his last cash, he began seriously to contemplate the sad necessity of selling his jinricksha, the only property he possessed, in order to stave off for the moment the pangs of hunger. Indeed he felt already the craving for a substantial meal, as he had been economising for some days and had only dared to indulge in the barest necessities ; so that it was with intense eagerness he watched on every side for some chance passenger, whose fee, were it ever so small, would be the means of saving him from the misfortunes with which he now was menaced. Presently his heart gave a great jump of joy as he observed a stalwart specimen of the British tar, evidently come on shore for a day's holiday, jump from a sam-pan* on a wharf, and heard him calling lustily for a jinricksha. The wished-for happiness had come at last ; now the longed-for money would speedily

* The small boats plying for hire in China are called *sam-pans*, literally, "three boards," probably from the primitive manner in which they used to be constructed.

be earned, and a good meal would reward the poor native for all his anxious waiting. With the renewal of bright hopes the jinricksha man's energies were restored, and at first he bowled the heavy sailor along at a pace to which even the inconsiderate Jack could make no objection. It is needless to say that the jinricksha was directed to the low grog-shops, which intrude their loathsome presence on the notice of poor weak-minded sailors in all seaports, no matter how remote the country, or how deadly the climate may be. As the sailor went about from one vile den to another, the poor jinricksha man began to feel anxious about his fee, he began also to feel very weak and hungry, and every time his fare came out of a house he implored him with increasing earnestness to pay him something and let him go. But Jack was determined to make a day of it; he would keep the jinricksha until he had completed his jovial rounds, and whether the unfortunate "nigger," who had to drag him about, couched his piteous entreaties in his own language, or pointed to his mouth as a sign that

he wanted something to eat, it was all the same to the sailor; the whole affair was only a "lark," and the "nigger" was laughed at, and ordered to run on to the next tavern. At length the constant drinking of poisonous liquor began to have its inevitable effect upon the sailor, just as the hard work was beginning to tell on the famishing Chinaman; and as evening advanced the tipsy passenger began to swear at and beat the staggering jinricksha man for the slowness of his movements. Hope, however, still sustained the poor native, and urged him to put forth what little strength remained to earn a full day's wages; a whole dollar would at least be given him, he thought, and on the morrow he could afford to rest a little, and regale himself to his heart's content. As darkness had set in, the end must, he thought, be near; but it was not until the night was far advanced that the jinricksha man, almost fainting with fatigue and hunger, drew the now thoroughly intoxicated sailor to the wharf, from which he was to leave for his vessel. At last the day's weary work was over, the sailor left the



jinricksha, and the weak, starving, bruised, patient Chinaman held his hand out for the dollar which was to be the reward of all his sufferings. I blush to tell what followed. The brutal sailor had probably spent all his money, at all events he refused with an oath to pay for the jinricksha. But worse was to follow: when the poor young native pursued the drunken man towards the boat with the earnestness of despair, beseeching some small return for his labours, he was turned upon, felled to the ground, and kicked as he lay there, and, as if a very demon had entered the heart of the infuriated sailor, the jinricksha was next seized, broken to pieces, and flung into the deep river, where its fragments were soon lost beyond all hope of recovery. The sailor, having completed his savage work, went unmolested to his vessel, and next day, probably, he entertained his messmates with a lively description of whatever he remembered of his adventures on shore. The lazy good-for-nothing Chinaman might have died, kicked to death where he lay, or he might have

ended his misery by one wild plunge after his lost jinricksha, for all Jack cared. Neither sad event occurred, however; the jinricksha man was unable for some minutes to move, but after a time he was found by one of his fellow-countrymen, almost as poor and destitute as himself, who helped him to a poor shelter, shared with him his humble supper of rice and fish, cheered him with some words of comfort, and gave him a mat on which to rest his aching feeble limbs. Next day the jinricksha man crawled away as best he could from the town where he had met with such cruel treatment, and in the evening arrived, half-dead with fatigue and pain and disappointment, at his father's house, where for some days he lay, tended with anxious care, hovering between life and death. He ultimately recovered, but he is still more or less of an invalid; and who can wonder if he himself cherishes, and tries his utmost to instil into the minds of his sympathising neighbours, a deadly animosity against the foreign barbarian?

It is not without an object that I tell this little

story. I know there are amongst the wretched jinricksha coolies of Shanghai many of the outcasts of society, gamblers, cheats, opium-smokers; I know, too, that drunken sailors are sometimes imposed upon, and, I suspect, even robbed by these men. But to the most superficial observer the other side of the picture is constantly proved to be only too true, and I will venture to assert that for one honest tar who gets led astray or injured by the jinricksha men, fifty of the latter are cruelly beaten by sailors, and are thankful if they receive any reward from their inhuman employers. For misguided Jack there are amongst his countrymen everywhere hosts of sympathisers; from Shanghai residents specially I would fain bespeak a portion of the sympathy for the weak, despised, though not always despicable objects of Jack's harsh and often cruel treatment.

To resume my gossip about amahs. At Foochow I was induced to try a servant who could not speak even "pidgin" English, and as she was recommended for her intelligence, I thought it would be possible to train her in the manner which would suit me best. I

need hardly say that the experiment ended in failure. I succeeded in teaching her a little English, and one phrase which I was in the habit of using when I no longer wanted her services—"Can do, amah, no wanchee, amah, just now; amah can go"—evidently impressed itself upon her memory, without, however, conveying the exact meaning; for when one day I went to her room to see how she was performing some work I had given her, she said, to my astonishment: "No wanchee, mississee, just now; mississee can go!" She meant to assure me that she could do the work I had given her without supervision, and I could see that no impertinence was intended.

Another amah, in answering my question as to when she returned from a little party to which she had been invited, said: "My have come home very early; Chinaman no have got 'sing-song,' no makee play that *nonsensee*, allo same master and mississee, finishce dinner." Such was her way of describing the after-dinner amusements of Europeans.

Writing of the amahs I have known, reminds me of a little incident, brought about by the carelessness of one of these servants, which showed a wonderful power of memory on the part of a little pet bird. I had placed in the charge of my amah two very pretty little birds, the last of six which I had brought with me from Formosa. They were very small delicate things, with rather strong beaks, and rich brown plumage, and were of a species altogether unknown in the northern part of China, to the severe winter of which four of them had already succumbed. I tended the remaining pair with as much care as I could, but the amah occasionally supplied them with food and water. One day the amah left the cage-door open for a few minutes, and one of the little birds made its escape, and flew away through an open window. It was then late autumn, and soon afterwards the winter, as is often the case in Shanghai, set in suddenly and severely; all our windows had to be fastened up for the season, and for five months the cold was unusually great, such heavy frost and snow

having never before been seen by "the oldest inhabitant;" and our thoughts and our pity were often bestowed on the poor little wanderer, about whose fate in such severe weather there could hardly be a question. With the return of spring windows were again thrown open, and one morning, nearly six months after the loss of the bird, when I was visiting my pets on the verandah, I was astonished to find the little solitary Formosan bird in a great state of excitement, and on closer inspection I saw to my great delight that the cause of the commotion was the return of the wanderer, which was fluttering about the outside of the cage, and evidently wanted to rejoin its old companion. On the cage-door being opened the returned prodigal eagerly flew in, and the restored friends seemed quite happy to be once more together. It has always been a wonder to me how the little bird managed to survive out of doors the bitter winter cold, or to eke out a living amongst the other birds, who

must have looked upon him as a stranger, and an intruder. Probably he had become acclimatised before his flight, and no doubt his strong beak proved a valuable defence against the enmity of other birds.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Chinese New Year—Many native customs exactly the opposites of ours—Kindness and politeness of the Chinese people.

AMONGST the most remarkable of Chinese customs are those which are observed at New Year time. Chinese New Year generally falls somewhere about the beginning of our February, and is undoubtedly *the* great festival of the year, the only real holiday enjoyed by the toiling industrious millions scattered over the vast Celestial Empire; for although there are in nearly every month certain holidays which are observed by the better classes with more or less ceremony, it is only at New Year that high and low, rich and poor, put aside for the time their ordinary avocations, and give themselves up without restraint to the due

celebration and full enjoyment of the festive time. Long before the eventful period arrives great preparations are in progress, extra bustle is observable in the streets, and extra animation is apparent in every countenance. The shops—especially the provision-shops—are filled with tempting wares, the display of slaughtered pigs hung up in front of the pork-butchers' being particularly remarkable. Lamps are suspended over doors and windows, and attached to the door-posts and window-frames are long strips of red paper, having boldly inscribed upon them mottoes appropriate to the season: "May the Five Blessings come to this door," "New Year, New Happiness," etc. Business people are particularly active at this period squaring up their accounts, for a Chinaman considers it *de rigueur* to pay off all outstanding debts before the old year is out, and thus commence the new year without any arrears, and with a clear conscience. Houses are made clean—a rare event in China—and few indeed are those who do not supply themselves, or who are

not supplied by their husbands, fathers, or other friends, with some new article of dress for the great occasion. Children are in a fever of excitement, for besides the new clothes they are likely to have, are there not wonderful toys to be presented to them, or, better still, to be purchased with their own money, during that much-longed-for stroll through the gay streets which they are to enjoy presently with their father or elder brother as their guide? Fresh ornaments, flowers, and candles are placed round the little shrine which every house possesses, and every tradesman and shopkeeper decorates his signboard with cloth of flaring red—the Chinese festive colour.

At last the happy day dawns. With the first glimpse of light a host of boys, who have been eagerly on the watch for the break of day, commence discharging their huge stock of fireworks; the fusilade is taken up by the entire row of houses lining the narrow streets, and the New Year is ushered in with a din and uproar which render sleep for the remainder of the morning impossible.

The first duty of the day is then performed; children do reverence to their parents, wives to their husbands, servants to their masters, wishing them on bended knee "a happy new year." Early breakfast is quickly disposed of, and then commences the serious duty of making calls. Old men remain at home in state to receive the congratulations and good wishes of those who have not yet attained the happy and privileged state of old age; but the younger men, clad in their very best raiment, sally forth on their round of visits, in sedan-chairs with an attendant card-bearer if they are well off, or on foot, carrying their own large leather card-case, if they are in less easy circumstances. It is amusing to see the "get up" of your old native acquaintances on these occasions. You wonder at first who the swaggering individual can be who comes strutting along the street towards you in all the glory of a mandarin hat and long silken robe, his left hand placed across his breast and his right arm, with a sleeve half-a-foot too long for it, extended at full length, and swaying backwards

and forwards in the most approved official fashion. Presently the gorgeous creature stops suddenly before you, joins his sleeve-covered hands in front of him, raises them to his chin, and with a low bow and a grin wishes you, in "pidgin English," a happy new year. Then for the first time it dawns upon you that you are addressed by your old house-boy, who left you last year to get married and set up in business, and who was reproved by you when last you saw him for wearing such a greasy cap and such a slovenly cotton gown. A-ping tells you in a few hurried words—for he "wanchee chin-chin too muchey piecey man"—that he is doing well, and wishing you "plenty No. 1 good chancey this year," makes another bow and passes on. Children arrayed in all the colours of the rainbow, and displaying with pardonable pride their recently-purchased gew-gaws, are paraded up and down the busy streets; friends meeting each other in the street salute in the most formal manner; faces beaming with smiles and contentment are seen on every side, but go where you will, in

country or in town, in the richest streets or in the poorest, great and universal though the holiday be, your ears will not be offended by the drunkard's maniacal screech, and rarely, if ever, will you see the staggering form of an inebriate.

For some days the shops are closed, and the streets remain *en fête*, and it is only gradually, and with a certain amount of reluctance, that the ordinary state of affairs is resumed, and things get back to their old groove for one long year more.

In the various parts of China in which I lived I had abundant opportunities for observing the peculiar manners and customs of the people, many of them exactly the opposite of those which obtain amongst ourselves. Just as the needle of our compass points to the north, whereas the same instrument in China points to the south, so do our habits of thought, and modes of action, often seem to take directions exactly the reverse of those which prevail amongst the Chinese people. Our men consider it rude to keep their hats on in company; Chinamen think it rude, under the

circumstances, to take theirs off. We, especially those of us who belong to the gentler sex, dread to be thought old, and endeavour to retain as long as possible the manners and appearance of youth; Chinese of both sexes are glad to be considered old, and deem it a compliment to be told they look older than they really are. The most reckless man amongst us would never think of marrying a woman with whose face he was not perfectly familiar; no respectable Chinaman, who had any regard for propriety, would think of gazing upon his bride's face until the conclusion of the marriage ceremony. Our children play shuttlecock with their hands; Chinese children play the same game with their feet. The exciting pastime of flying kites is only practised by juveniles amongst us; in China the majority of kite-flyers are grown-up, and even very old, men. A snow-white tablecloth, which we consider a necessary adjunct to every meal, would have the same effect upon the nerves and appetite of a Chinaman unused

to our ways as a funeral-pall spread upon the table would have upon ours. Chinese writing, as everyone knows, proceeds from right to left, and they begin their books at what we consider the end; and so in various other respects their methods, as has frequently been pointed out by writers, are exactly the opposite of what ours would be under similar conditions. But by degrees all these peculiarities ceased to be remarkable, and, after my six years' residence amongst them, I have nothing but the most agreeable recollections of the Chinese people; whether as acquaintances, servants, or tradesmen, I found them almost invariably kind, thoughtful, and obliging. They have their faults of course, as all other people have; but my own experience is that Chinamen and Chinawomen, if treated kindly, will serve you at least as honestly and as faithfully as natives of any other country. In all my wanderings through China I never received an insult from the natives; on the contrary, kind words, pleasant smiles,

hospitable offers, greeted me on every side ;
and it cannot be wondered at that, with such a
delightful experience, I cherish a fond remembrance
of the many happy days and hours I have passed
“Among the Sons of Han.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

Departure from Shanghai—The return voyage—Home again !

THE morning of Good Friday, 26th March, 1880, dawned fair and beautiful, and though we had been up late the night before we were stirring betimes, and busy making our final preparations for our voyage home. At eleven o'clock, accompanied by a number of friends, we left the wharf in a steam-launch, and directed our way towards the splendid mail steamer *Djemnah*, now swinging to the flood-tide in mid-river, and flying the flag which showed that the mails were on board, and that everything was in readiness for an early departure. Glad as I felt at the prospect of a return to Europe, I was heartily sorry at

parting from so many well-wishers, and from a place where I had lived so long and so happily; and as if to increase my regrets, Shanghai never appeared to better advantage than it did that bright March morning, with its magnificent show of buildings along the river-banks and its pretty public garden, bathed in a flood of glorious sunshine. The last farewells having been spoken and the decks cleared of visitors, the great steamer began to move slowly away, dipping her ensign as a parting homage to those we were leaving behind us. The steam-launch, with our special friends on board, followed us as long as she could keep pace with the *Djemnah*; but our speed soon quickened, and before long we could distinguish nothing but the waving of white handkerchiefs, which continued until we had passed the last of the riverside bungalows, and Shanghai itself had faded from our view. Taking the bright sunshine which greeted our departure as a happy omen, we looked forward with certainty to a pleasant voyage in the superb steamer which bore

us along, and the hopes thus created were more than realised in the result.

Our voyage to Hongkong was a quick and pleasant one; so smooth was the sea that we were able to indulge in a little dancing in the saloon. At Hongkong we felt that we had already entered that belt of heat which at all seasons of the year must be passed through on the voyage to or from the East; and after the bright but crisp weather we had lately been enjoying in Shanghai, the contrast was very noticeable. Two pleasant days, during which we were glad to meet several of our friends, soon passed, and we started on our voyage to Saigon. We arrived at the latter place early in the morning, and, the tide being favourable, we at once proceeded up the river. Before, however, we had accomplished any great distance, the truth of some remarks I ventured to make in my opening chapter became apparent, and the danger of dragging such large steamers up such a narrow winding river was fully demonstrated. At five o'clock in the morning I was in my

cabin, gazing out of my window at the dense green forest on the river-bank, when I was startled by a strange noise as if some part of the ship's machinery had broken; then followed a confused din, the loud cries of sailors, and the rapid running of feet overhead. Presently the vessel tilted over on her side, until our cabin window was quite close to the water, but in a few minutes she regained, greatly to my relief, an upright position. All the passengers were speedily on deck to inquire what was the matter, and it was then found that, in turning a sharp bend of the river, the steering apparatus had yielded to the enormous strain, and broken, and the steamer, no longer manageable, ran, stern on, amongst the trees and brushwood of the jungle. Fortunately no serious damage was done to the vessel, but it was two hours before the necessary repairs were effected and we managed to get clear of our difficulties. We then continued our voyage up the river, the *Djemnah* bearing proudly on her bow some branches of a tree she had come in contact with

during her visit to the jungle. All the horrors of our previous visit to Saigon were repeated on this occasion ; the intense heat, unmitigated by the faintest breath of air, prostrated us ; insects great and small invaded the sacred precincts of our cabins and berths ; and during the wretched night of our stay sleep resolutely refused to visit our wearied eyelids.

During the afternoon after our arrival, we drove out to what appeared to be, with the exception perhaps of the Governor's grounds, the only pleasant spot in the surrounding wilderness, the public gardens. Here we wandered about under lofty trees, amongst an endless variety of tropical plants, some of them very beautiful ; but the large aviary full of lovely birds, and the collection of wild animals, most of them natives of the neighbouring country, form the chief attractions of the place. The lions and tigers were, I think, the only living beings looking at all comfortable or happy in Saigon. Nothing could be more melancholy or woe-begone than the

appearance of the soldiers and other Europeans whose fate it is to reside in such a trying climate ; they all looked, without exception, pale, thin and miserable. As before, I was indeed thankful when we steamed away from Saigon, and breathed once more the fresh pure air which met us on our way towards the sea. A short pleasant run brought us to Singapore, where we enjoyed a charming drive along the beautiful road which leads to the botanical gardens, returning to the hotel, where we dined and slept. On account of the great heat we left our door and windows open during the night, and, with the confidence which my residence in China had taught me, I left my jewellery and little valuables lying unprotected on my dressing-table. As it happened, however, this was not a wise act in a Singapore hotel, for next morning we heard that an adjoining room had been entered during the night, and one of our fellow-passengers who slept there was robbed of his purse and his revolver. Fortunately for me the thief did not extend his researches to my room.

From Singapore to Galle, and from Galle to Aden, our voyage continued to be as pleasant as a sea-voyage could possibly be, and the weather was so propitious that we had the piano all the time on the quarter-deck, and every evening we were able to get up a dance or a concert or some other amusement. Of music we had sometimes a little more than we admired, and I can still fancy I hear the frantic efforts made by two of the male passengers to learn the instruments they had purchased for the purpose of whiling away the tedium of the voyage. One devoted all his energies to the learning of the flute, the other struggled hard in his efforts to acquire the ability to strum the guitar; the former had his daily practice outside, the latter inside, the saloon at the same hour. Each musician had apparently made up his mind to stick to one air until it was thoroughly mastered; the flautist had selected "Home, Sweet Home," as an appropriate piece with which to charm the domestic circle he was so soon to join, whilst the guitarman's ambition seemed to aim at being able some day to overcome the diffi-

culties of "The Last Rose of Summer." It would have been hard perhaps to have chosen two more beautiful airs, but even these, when practised by two bunglers within hearing of each other, on an afternoon on board ship, in a tropical climate, when one is probably trying to get a refreshing nap, are anything but soothing; and though music has always had great attractions for me, I must confess I was delighted when these performers were at last voted a nuisance, and requested by the captain to practise their solos in a more obscure corner of the vessel.

At Aden we drove to the famous water-tanks, a number of large reservoirs formed at the foot of the hills, and so arranged that they can catch as much water as possible on the very rare occasions when rain falls in those arid regions. The tanks were quite empty when we visited them, and the caretaker told us that for nearly four years not a drop of rain had fallen in the place! Under the circumstances Aden has to look for its water supply to the distant interior,

whence the needful element is conveyed across the desert in small leather bags shaped like gourds, on the backs of camels. In spite of its constant heat and aridity the place is said to be healthy, and the troops in the garrison looked strong and ruddy as compared with the poor sickly-looking French soldiers we had seen in Saigon. In the Red Sea we were fortunate enough to meet with a head wind, and in the very place where the heat is most dreaded we were positively cool. At Suez our boxes had to be ransacked for winter clothing and wraps, and the extremely hot weather was now a thing of the past. I shall not forget the delight I experienced at seeing once more at Suez a railway train, the first I had witnessed for more than six years; the sight made me realise more than anything else what a vast gap lies between the systems which prevail in the country where I had passed such a lengthened period, and the highly-civilised lands to which I was now returning. Arriving at Port Said in the afternoon, we went for a

stroll on shore, and as we passed the various cafés with which the place is plentifully supplied, we enjoyed the lively music which proceeded from these places of amusement; and as the doors and windows were generally open, we could see that the musicians forming the orchestras were females, the conductors, however, being invariably of the sterner sex. Soon after we left Port Said we fell in with a little rough weather, the first we had experienced since we left Shanghai; those who have ever made a long sea-voyage will at once understand the smoothness of our passage when I mention that, with the exception of these few hours in the Mediterranean, our cabin "port" remained open all the time. As we approached the coast of Italy the excitement on board was great, and all were eager to catch the first glimpse of Europe. The scenery which soon met our gaze was grand in the extreme, and the bold mountain-peaks, the graceful-looking valleys, and the many little hamlets nestling on the mountain-side, made Calabria

appear in our eyes like some fair vision of the Promised Land. But a still more lovely sight was to greet us later on. As evening advanced we approached the Straits of Messina, and then commenced one continuation of the most charming views, each one seeming more delightful than the one preceding it; by the time night came on, and the full moon, attended by myriads of twinkling stars, lighted up the clear sky, we were passing Messina, and the brilliantly-lighted houses on shore shone out in rivalry to the stars above, and completed the most enchanting picture it had ever been my lot to see.

Next morning we anchored in the lovely Bay of Naples, and our long sea-journey was now at an end. On the *Djemnah* we had been as comfortable as it was possible to be on board ship; for not only had the weather been favourable, but the captain, who was the personification of kindness and courtesy, and all his officers were most attentive and considerate throughout the entire voyage. With many regrets we parted from

them all, and within half-an-hour we stood once more on European soil, surrounded by a yelling mob of boatmen, custom-house officers, flower-girls, cabmen, hotel-touts, and beggars.

It is no part of my design to enter into a description of the many interesting sights we saw during our leisurely journey through Italy. Suffice it to say that we basked in the sunshine of Naples, and wandered over the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii; we stood beneath the dome of St. Peter's, and revelled in the artistic glories of the Vatican; we climbed the lofty ruins of the Colosseum, and penetrated the dark vaults of the Catacombs; we looked down from the heights of Fiesole on the fair city of Dante, and gazed with rapture on the marvellous art-treasures which adorn the Pitti and Uffizi collections; we glided in a gondola through the silent thoroughfares of Venice beneath the Bridge of Sighs, and beheld the stately Palace of the Doges; we were charmed with the graceful outlines of Milan's grand Cathedral, and enchanted with the quiet beauty of the lovely

Lake Como; we shot through the Alps by the Mount Cenis tunnel, and at last found ourselves in the gay city of Paris, where we rested for some days before completing the final stage of our travels.

I may mention that amongst our fellow-passengers on the little steamer by which we travelled on Lake Como, there was one lady whose sweet kind face and gentle unassuming manner attracted our particular attention as she sat in the midst of us with her children grouped around her. We ascertained afterwards that the lady we admired so much was the Crown Princess of Germany, who happened at the time to be travelling quietly with some of her family in that part of Italy.

The time at length arrived for which I had so often yearned, and I was again amongst my friends AT HOME. Some of the bright hopes which had cheered me on parting from those I held most dear were not to be realised, and words of loving welcome, which had often been whispered to me in my dreams when far away, could never now

be addressed to me. But though the joy of my return was robbed of much of its sweetness, there was still a great deal left for thankfulness, and it was with feelings of sincere gratitude that we found ourselves once more in the old country, amongst our own people, and saved from all the perils which beset us in our wanderings beyond the seas.

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